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The Week

A BARRAGE of speeches has just been fired by the administration to counteract the lingering effect of the Wirt charges that a small group of brain-trusters was plotting to establish a dictatorship over America. Tugwell, Wallace and Hull have all spoken, directly or indirectly, on this theme. Though their treatment of it varies, we gather that the nub of the reply is about as follows: Before the present administration, a dictatorship over major industry was actually established by a small group of self-seeking capitalists. They were the ones really guilty of regimenting industry, and they did it in their own interest. But their control led to disaster. What the present administration is trying to do is to preserve and extend democracy by taking exclusive control away from the financial oligarchy and giving a share in economic power to farmers, workers, consumers, small business men. That is essentially a conservative effort—the best safeguard against political upheaval and dictatorship. This defense is unassailable in its premises and conclusions. It would be a perfectly good defense if it were not for one embarrassing fact. The administration has not done what it says it is trying to do. On the contrary, through the N.R.A. it has handed the government of business back to the old rulers, with increased powers. And the money-changers have not been driven out of the temple. It is one of the ironies of politics that just at the time when big business has achieved a hitherto unknown supremacy, a cry should be raised charging the brain-trusters with dictatorship. The administration, unless it actually does what it says it wants to do, is likely to become the scapegoat for the failures of its declared opponents.

AFTER reading several hundred thousand words of Washington correspondence in the daily press during the past week, we feel able to clear up everything that may have bothered those who only have time to glance at the headlines. The President, who a few months ago believed that juggling the currency could bring us out of the depression, is now unalterably opposed to any such thing. He has demonstrated his opposition by pointing out to inflationists that he already possesses the powers they would give him and that additional laws for the remonetization of silver, etc., are therefore not necessary. He hopes, moreover, that these additional laws will be discretionary and not mandatory. We are glad to note that the number of unemployed who have been put back to work in private industry, or under the P.W.A., or under the C.W.A., or under emergency work relief, if you add up all the various sets of figures, is nearly as large as the total number of unemployed, though we are slightly perturbed to note also that the number of those without jobs throughout the country seems to be almost as large as ever. We are pleased to learn from General Johnson that the N.R.A. is about to crack down (or was it wisecrack down?) on the big industrialists for violating their codes; the chief big industrialist of the week was a New Jersey tailor who cut five cents off the price for pressing a suit. The President's automobile settlement succeeded so well that only about 10,000 workers went on strike this week. Mr. Roosevelt wants the railroad workers to get along on existing wages so that the roads can have more money to spend for equipment. We are waiting for him to apply the same principle to stockholders whose profits have recently increased so fabulously.

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THE Bankhead law for cotton control has been generally described as a step toward a planned economy; but this is true only in a limited sense. For one thing, it is avowedly emergency legislation to meet a temporary situation; and for another, artificial restrictions on production are an old and familiar device both here and abroad. The new law reduces production by about 40 percent under the average of recent years, and on a pro-rata basis. Cotton grown in excess of the quotas will be subject to a prohibitive tax of 50 percent of its value. In a sample vote, some thousands of cotton planters expressed approval of the plan by more than nine to one; but it is far from sure that they will continue to like it after it is in operation, and wholesale "bootlegging" is by no means an impossibility, especially if the price goes up as much as the administration hopes it will. The worst problem of all has to do with the share croppers and other tenant farmers: there is great danger that millions of these men, and their families, may be turned out on the highway to live on charity, or to starve, by planters who prefer to raise their 60-percent quota themselves. About the best thing to be said for the bill is that, bad as are the conditions it threatens to produce, the situation without it seemed likely to be even worse.

AFTER earnest reflection on the moral principles and social significance of John F. Curry's dismissal by Tammany, we rise to announce that there aren't any. It is an old custom among savages to kill their defeated generals, and that is what happened to Mr. Curry. True, he was singularly lacking in the qualifications for public life, even for a Tammany leader. True, if he ever did anything that benefited the people of New York, we have never heard of it. True, he permitted an unparalleled orgy of those heavenly triplets, waste, inefficiency and corruption. But none of these things would ever have turned Tammany against him. He was fired because he got licked. What is significant, we think, is the fact that absolutely nobody is trying to pretend that there is a New Tammany now; that the dear young college graduates in old Tammany families will take hold and clean things up. It's the same old Tammany; it will get a lot of advice from Mr. Farley, spokesman for Mr. Roosevelt, but Mr. Farley is on the whole a Tammany kind of person himself, whose only interest in reform would be in reform of a sort that made him a more important figure in New York City affairs. Tammany will just sit tight and wait for the pendulum to swing back in its direction; it has seen reform administrations before, and has survived them all and returned to power. It may be wrong this time; but it is certainly going to act on the assumption that it is right.

YOU might add to your list of World's Unsolved Mysteries the question: Why did not the United States aid in the rescue of more than a hundred Russians who were marooned on an ice floe in Bering Sea? All these persons were at last saved, through a series of brilliant and daring flights by Soviet aviators in one of the most heroic adventures of recent years. The United States has an airfield at Nome, Alaska, much nearer the stranded Russians than any airport of their own country; indeed, some of the Russian aviators were actually sent to aid the rescue by way of the Atlantic Ocean, the United States and Alaska. If a Russian ship were sinking at sea, any American vessel in the vicinity would unquestionably have gone to her aid; and everyone must remember the assistance the Russians have in the past given to American aviators, and notably to Jimmy Mattern. We can think of only one explanation for the inaction of our government's aviators in the face of this opportunity for a fine piece of gallantry: perhaps the administration, remembering the twelve deaths of army flyers since the air mail was taken over, hesitated to risk any more lives just now. If that is the true explanation, it is not a pretty one.

CALIFORNIA fruit growers, determined to continue long hours and starvation wages in the ragged army of itinerant workers who harvest the crop, have resorted to a new device. They have in the past, as our readers know, denied striking workers all civil rights, have put them in jail en masse, beaten them and even resorted to murder in the course of their terroristic efforts. Now, in some counties, new ordinances have been enacted forbidding all assemblages or processions on the highways—"except funerals." This is to prevent picketing and mass movements of workers from one place to another. The idea of exempting funerals seems to us a peculiarly happy one. We suggest that the first funeral under the new law ought to have at its head a coffin with the words printed on it: "Dead: in California, the old American spirit of fair play, a decent respect for the opinions of mankind and the 'inalienable' right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

PROBABLY because of the balmy spring weather, we have got two items in the week's news inextricably entangled in what we call our mind. The first is the report of the remarkable pacifist activities among the Indians in Bolivia. When a recruiting agent was sent to them to persuade them to join the glorious war for the Bolivian fatherland, they responded by an effective gesture in favor of peace: they killed the agent, cooked him and ate him. The other story which keeps getting mixed up with this one in our thoughts is that of the New York doctor who, after a court battle that cost him $3,000, managed to get what he said was an overcharge of $5.40 taken off his telephone bill. On these misty April days, the lesson we draw from all this is that the world would be ever so much better if, when the telephone inspector comes to answer your complaint about an overcharge, you were to pop him

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quietly into the kettle where tonight's Irish stew is bubbling merrily away. But, obviously, there is something wrong with this suggestion: Bolivia may lose a war, but the telephone company loses only skirmishes. Perhaps we had better drop the whole thing.

MR. Paul Cadmus, a young artist working for the P.W.A.P., painted a picture, "The Fleet's In," showing a robust group of sailors on shore leave hailing an equally robust group of female friends. This picture was sent to Washington for exhibition, where it was seen by a group of high naval officers who promptly turned purple above their epaulettes, denounced it as a libel on our seafaring men, and ordered it to do thirty days' solitary in the basement. We admit the incident has us worried. For years the Marine Corps has been impugning the manly vigor of the gob while its own prowess has been celebrated, not only in song and story but in series of motion pictures all of which, as we recall, were entitled "The Cock-Eyed World." Can it be that the admirals are now prepared to admit the gentle impeachment? We prefer to hope not, and to assume their motto is that sailors and other gentlemen never tell, even on canvas. Meanwhile, another art dispute is going on just across the White House lawn from the Navy Building. Some of the younger spirits in the Agricultural Department are unhappy about the new $30,000 mural ordered in the flush days of Mr. Hoover, and painted in the severely classical style that is today most frequently found on the front drop of a small-town vaudeville theatre. With every desire to be helpful, we suggest that the Navy and the Agriculturists effect an exchange. The admirals ought to be ever so happy over a quiet classical landscape, with its pleasant suggestion of cornucopias, pansies, violets and other floral beauties.

WE HEAR that the administration is considering the appointment of a commission to study the operations of the Federal Deposit Insurance Fund with the purpose of proposing changes in the law before the permanent fund finally becomes operative. The law as it stands is neither sound nor sufficiently broad to cover the new problems created by the large-scale capital participation of the federal government. In the first place, the measure poses as a guarantee of bank deposits when, in spite of practically unlimited liability of participating banks, it is only a gigantic and very costly form of insurance which has already been tried in several states without success. In the second place, it makes no real provision for defining the relationship among the R.F.C., the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and individual stockholders. The issue in this question of relations is control of management. To have an administration commission devote its time to a study of proposed changes in the act ought, therefore, to be a matter for comfort and encouragement.

BUT there is one very unfortunate circumstance. Most of the opposition to the law in its present form comes from many of the larger banks, and is directed against the non-limitation of liability of participants. Such pressure as these big banks are able to exert toward a revision of the bill—and some of them go so far as to threaten to withdraw from the Federal Reserve System—might, it is very easy to imagine, induce the commission still further to weaken the features designed to protect the depositors, by recommending a definite, and not necessarily adequate, limit to the resources of the Insurance Corporation. Banks need not fail. To keep them from failing there must be a high standard of bank management and genuine powers of control over management wielded by a competent public agency. Given these conditions, you may set what limit you will to the funds available for insurance of deposits, and the funds will be adequate. This, then, is the opportunity offered to an administration commission—to strengthen the control of the central banking authorities. If such a commission were to be content merely to bribe the big banks to remain in the permanent fund by cutting down their liabilities, it would contribute to the demoralization of a system in which there is already a premium on reckless banking. Let us have the commission by all means, but let it understand actually what its task should be.

AFTER the article by Emily White Stevens on the proposed milk control, in this issue of The New Republic, had gone to press, news came that the A.A.A. had abandoned the plan because of lack of support from the producers' organizations. The article is still germane, however, not only because schemes to curb milk output may be revived in the future, but also because the dairy farmers still need relief, and the author's proposals for better remedies are worth considering.

Japan's Challenge to the West

NO IMMEDIATE ISSUE.—The spokesman of the Japanese Foreign Office may have been sending up a trial balloon when he referred to a memorandum which had been drafted to be shown to other governments, regarding Japan's attitude toward their relations with China. Nevertheless, in view of the whole direction of Japanese policy, if such an official communication is not made now it will probably be made later. Japan asserts that it is her special mission to impose order in the Far East, and in doing so she objects to loans, exports of airplanes or other activities that might aid Chinese military forces. According to the Associated Press report of the interview, Japan herself must determine whether foreign attempts to aid China imperil peace and order in Eastern Asia. "It is our responsibility. We must be the judges." Japan, the spokesman said, would act positively if

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necessary. If foreign attempts to "disturb peace in Asia" are backed forcefully, "Japan herself may be compelled to resort to force."

In plain words, this means that the government of Japan objects to such things as the American loan to finance Chinese purchases of wheat and cotton, to the recent sales of airplanes by American or other firms in China, to the German military mission, to aid for China by the League of Nations, to the Chinese use of American aviators for training purposes. No doubt, most of these things are regarded by the government of the United States as merely ordinary transactions taking place in the normal course of trade and international amity. If Japan merely sent a note objecting to them, there might ensue a debate. There might be references to the open door, to the Nine Power Treaty, to international law and what not. But without positive action on the part of any government, trade with China would go on as usual. In order to make a pressing issue out of her policy, Japan would have to use military or naval force to seize Chinese ports or otherwise interrupt commerce. Thus the initial advantage rests with the status quo. We need do nothing about it so long as Japan contents herself with talking.

The Ultimate Choice.—Japan, however, does not habitually content herself with talking. If, as now seems likely, she intends not only to keep China weak in order to protect her conquests in Manchuria, but to extend her military and diplomatic suzerainty over other parts of China, with a view to reserving Chinese markets for her own exploitation, the United States will ultimately be faced with an unpleasant alternative. Either our government must give up its traditional insistence on the open door and our industries and financiers must relinquish all thought of profits in Chinese trade, or we must go to war for these objectives.

Of course it may be argued that Japan is now talking only about that kind of trade and financial assistance that she regards as having a direct military value. Even so, the problem is difficult enough. The memorandum to which the Foreign Office spokesman referred is virtually a demand that other governments establish an embargo against all exports to China of munitions, as well as all financial and personal assistance that might be turned to military purposes. Now, a good case may be made for such an embargo, in peacetime as well as in war, provided it is a general and impartial one. Traffic in arms is not a pleasant business, and it surely endangers the peace of the world. But no nation could discriminate against China in this way so long as she remains even technically an equal in the family of nations. We should have to apply the embargo against Japan and all other powers.

However, in practice the issue is not likely to be so phrased. Japan, it will be noted, retains the right to judge what trade is to be barred. Past efforts to distinguish between contraband and non-military articles have been difficult in the extreme; belligerents tend to enlarge the contraband list until it includes almost everything of importance in peace. If military airplanes are barred, what about civil aircraft? What about tractors and trucks and automobiles? What about steel, machinery, chemicals? What about wheat and cotton—to China's receipt of which Japan already seems to object? It is really impossible to draw the line where it will leave much legitimate trade, especially if the nation that does the judging has its eye on economic exploitation as the end of its policy.

The logical result of Japan's present course is, therefore, to present to the United States the alternative between giving up the right to trade with China and waging war upon Japan. It would, of course, be insanity to choose the second alternative. Any major war is in itself a disastrous experience. And this war in particular would be almost certain to end with our surrender of the thing fought for. The United States navy could not possibly be successful in engagements with the Japanese in Asiatic waters. Even the American and British navies combined would have only a chance of dominance in such an endeavor. A world alliance against Japan would be the only means of anything like certain victory. But Japan would doubtless count on preventing any such unison by offering some of the more unimportant Powers a share in Asiatic imperialism in the shape of "spheres of influence" and the partitioning of China. And doubtless she would be successful in this endeavor. Whether our government surrendered without a struggle or chose the mad course of resistance, the eventual outcome would be likely to be the same, as far as the chance to share largely in the development of China is concerned. We should lose it.

The Economic Outcome.—What has come to the surface in this dispute is just the old story of exclusive economic nationalism, which inevitably turns into imperialism when the capitalist methods of governing industry run into difficulties in any one country. Laissez-faire taught that if trade is left free, if prices are uncontrolled, if competition does its work and if individuals are allowed to seek profit, not only will separate nations prosper but the whole world will eventually become richer by interchanging the benefits of technical advance and of natural wealth. But the very freedom granted to profit-makers under this regime builds up powerful self-seeking interests that successfully limit competition and control prices and wages in such a way as temporarily to enrich themselves. Private interests use governments, first to shut foreign competitors out of their home markets, and then to reach out for exclusive privileges in backward areas.

There is now scarcely even a pretense at the "open door" in the highly protected and nationalist economies of North America and Europe; now Japan is ready to put the last nail in the coffin of international laissez-faire by shutting the trade door

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in the Far East. She believes that her economic domain must be enlarged if her people are to survive. But that conviction runs athwart the long cherished dream of capitalist policy-makers in the United States that our economy can some day find an outlet for our "surplus," which our own people have not the purchasing power to buy, through building up a modern industrial China.

The impending necessity for relinquishing this dream in the last great backward market of the world brings the sunset of capitalism so much closer in both the Occident and the Orient. The United States must either find a use for its immense productive capacity in creating plenty chiefly for its own citizens—which it cannot do without installing collectivism—or it must face general poverty and see the wealth of its economic rulers waste away because they cannot for long at a time keep their plants busy. Japan will consume her substance on an imperialistic adventure that must in the end bring her existing rulers to disaster. She has neither the material nor the human resources to keep the masses of China in subjection indefinitely. All this will occur even if the conflicting imperialisms do not, in their desperation, clash in a war that must bring both down in catastrophe.

Exit, Versailles

OF ALL the issues raised by Germany's National Socialist movement, its promise to scrap the Versailles Treaty has probably appealed more strongly to the Germans than any other. Its most captious critics will have to admit that it went about the business of solving this problem in an extraordinarily systematic manner. It avoided the mistakes of the Communist Reichstag group which in 1932 presented an unrealistic resolution repudiating the Versailles agreement. The adoption of such a declaration at that time would at once have forced the former Allies to resort to disastrous sanctions. The National Socialists pursued the more rational method of hollowing out the Treaty until it altogether ceased to be a factor in German politics.

The first step in this direction was the repudiation of the government's financial obligations under the peace agreement. In this field Brüning had already prepared the ground. His last debt agreement in Geneva, conceded by the Allies because they wished to fortify the Liberal-Centrist government against the rising Hitler storm, had practically done away with reparations payments although Germany officially remained the debtor of its former enemies for a relatively small amount.

Having thus got rid of her obligations to the victor states, Germany proceeded, by a series of carefully calculated maneuvers, to decrease her private debt. That was not quite so easy. It was one thing to repudiate reparations payments forced upon a bankrupt nation, another to withdraw from private obligations, voluntarily incurred, without undermining the credit of the nation in the world market. But the Nazi government rose to the occasion with the recent ingenious announcement by Reichsbank President Schacht that Germany looks upon her long-term foreign debts as being commercialized political obligations which she is under no moral compulsion to pay.

Nothing could be further from the truth. These loans were made to Germany by creditors in other countries who, with the fullest confidence in her financial integrity and her ability to restore her industries, had backed them up with important economic and political concessions to furnish a healthy foundation for her economic reconstruction so as to safeguard their own investments. They were the basis, for instance, of the removal of the Allied armies of occupation. Mr. Schacht was, of course, not unconscious of the fact that his sophistry must rob Germany of the confidence of the outside world. He admitted as much to the members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Berlin when he assured them that "Germany will not sacrifice its credit by its failure to pay these debts. He who does his job and does it well can always regain the credit he may have lost. One might, in this connection, refer to the fact that a number of South and Central American states are still looked upon as solvent although they have undergone not one but several national bankruptcies."

But in thus ridding herself of a large part of her indebtedness, the Reich denounces only a part of her post-war covenant. Not less irksome than the concrete burden of foreign indebtedness was the domination of the Powers over Germany's affairs abroad and at home. With her withdrawal from the League of Nations last October the Reich served notice on the world that she would no longer be bound by the League's restrictions. The effect of the declaration was electric. The Powers were surprised and horrified. The fear of a new war loomed so dark on Europe's horizon that Germany let matters rest for the time being. But her statesmen withdrew from the arena with the very satisfying conviction that her bold decision had given the nations of Europe a bad case of nerves, that Germany, far from being at the mercy of powerful neighbors, was looked upon with fear and misgiving. They drew the obvious conclusion. Up to that time the Reich had armed in secret and with circumspection. Now she flaunts her military preparations in the face of all comers. The Reich budget for 1934-35 provides for an increased expenditure of 607,000,000 marks for military purposes, 175,000,000 for the army, 50,000,000 for the navy, 132,000,000 for the creation of an air fleet and 250,000,000 for the "brown army," the Storm Divisions. That a budget of such dimensions must, in these circumstances, necessarily excite unfavorable comment is manifest.

The British Foreign Office, which during the past year has been Germany's most inveterate supporter, requested an explanation. The answer was more

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illuminating than polite. Germany, von Neurath declared, is bound to no budgetary limitations under the terms of the Versailles Treaty. There is a certain justification for this stand. But Germany deliberately ignores the incontestable fact that this does not apply to disbursements that contravene the provisions of the Versailles covenant. This is the case, however, when the German government makes costly appropriations for a reorganization of the Reichswehr on a basis of short-term military service, ignoring the fact that such reorganization can take place only with the consent of the signatories. This is the case, again, when huge appropriations are made for the building of an "aerial force for national defense," the very existence of which is forbidden by the terms of Versailles. In this connection a statement made by the German Air Minister, General Göring, to Sir Anthony Eden, when the latter ventured an inquiry as to Germany's armament intentions, is enlightening. "Germany," was the answer, "intends to have an air force second to none." With these words the spokesman of the German Cabinet served notice that the Treaty of Versailles was about to be thrown, another scrap of paper, at the feet of the Allied nations.

What now? The next move must be made by Germany's debtors, whose position is far from enviable. France is intensely occupied with her own internal affairs. Under more favorable circumstances, she would doubtless have rallied Belgium and the Little Entente and perhaps Great Britain and Italy as well, to decisive action. But things being as they are, with decision in the hands of London and Rome, the success of Germany's offensive is practically assured.

Belief or disbelief by the Allies of Germany's protestations of poverty will not greatly affect the final outcome. These cries of "wolf, wolf" have been the preliminary of every debt payment exacted from the Reich in the past. True, Germany is following the example set by Great Britain, France and most of the other Allied nations when she refuses to recognize her war-debt obligations. But no other European Power has as yet attempted to shake off its private loans.

The New Republic has always insisted that Germany would sooner or later be forced to repudiate her foreign obligations because she lacks the means to pay. Her trade balance has been on the downgrade for years. In the three months from October 1 to December 31, 1933, her gold and foreign-exchange reserves decreased 7,000,000 marks; from January 1 to March 31, 1934, this decline increased to 140,000,000, with no prospect of improvement. The same calamitous downward tendency is apparent in Germany's export trade. Since the first of the year, her trade balance has been for the most part unfavorable, her imports maintaining a growing advantage over her exports although it would have been possible to safeguard her dwindling foreign-exchange reserves by an import embargo. Her offer to pay in kind has always been rigidly refused by her creditor nations. High tariffs, quotas, embargoes and the world boycott have added immeasurably to her difficulties. The importation of cotton and wool in quantities sufficient to take care of Germany's industries for the next nine months in the face of this catastrophic drop in the Reichsbank's reserves suggests that the president of this institution resorted to flagrant manipulations to prepare the ground for this crisis.

This is not the first time that Schacht has resorted to such doubtful methods. When, under Hitler, he became president of the Reichsbank a second time, he at once repaid a credit of 400,000,000 to the International Bank at Basel, although the latter had made no such request. By thus halving the Reichsbank's reserves, the German government was placed in a more favorable position toward its creditors. Schacht is again using the same maneuver to dispose once and for all of what remains of Germany's huge indebtedness.

An immediate reduction of Germany's foreign trade will be the result. Despite von Neurath's rejection of the principle of autarky, she will be forced into an artificial state of self-sufficiency that will bring as the next step a regulation of commodity distribution like that of wartime. Once more the German masses willl be forced to live a life of "Prussian frugality." For the needs of the state—armaments by sea and by land and in the air—there will always be money enough.

What the final outcome of the present impasse will be, nobody today can foretell. The German people, schooled in trade-union and political organization and accustomed to a fairly high standard of living by years of relative prosperity, will not willingly accept for any length of time the lowered standard of an earlier era, a standard that the National Socialist rulers are trying to enforce for the furtherance of their own super-nationalist, imperialist aims. Sooner or later in the course of the next decade, the economic and political repressions of the Hitler regime will find an outlet in an explosion, at home or abroad, that may mark a turning point in European civilization.

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Father Coughlin

A Success Story of the Depression

ON THE broad highway that runs through a corner of suburban Royal Oak, just outside of Detroit, is Father Charles E. Coughlin's Shrine of the Little Flower. Of gray limestone, it is without a trace of Gothic—modern, rather, with an effective use of mass and line. In many ways this new shrine embodies the work of the "Radio Priest," as it typifies the method of the Catholic Church in the creation of a religious atmosphere which is sustained by a highly effective organization.

The casual visitor, and as the visitors' book indicates there are thousands of them from all parts of the country, sees a place of prayer and meditation, handsomely done, a relief of St. Therese of the Little Flower, carved, a guide informs the visitor, "from a single block of Carrara marble," above the altar. Beneath the shrine, entered by a basement door on the side, are the soundproof offices that house the remarkable organization that Father Coughlin has built up. Here is a force of 145 stenographers, the click of typewriters, mimeographs and addressograph machines; an atmosphere as efficient and as industrious as one might find in any corporation office. In the file room are steel files containing more than two million names and addresses, on the floor of this room a small mountain of mail sacks, representing a single day's mail.

Father Coughlin's mail is the heaviest of any person in the United States. His is one of the few success stories to come out of the depression. In the fall of 1926 he was appointed by Bishop Michael J. Gallagher of the Detroit diocese to be priest of the Royal Oak parish. A frame church with shingle exterior was built on the site of the present shrine and dedicated to the recently canonized St. Therese. The young priest, born in Ontario and educated under the Basilian Order, had been in his new parish scarcely more than a week when he announced to the dozen or more parishioners who were interested in the affairs of the church that he proposed to broadcast his sermons. His flock felt that he must be lacking in balance to plan such a costly and radical venture. But Father Coughlin went to see Leo R. Fitzpatrick, director of Station WJR in Detroit, and told him of his plan to broadcast a series of popular sermons. Fitzpatrick recognized that Father Coughlin spoke his own practical language, and it was not long before an arrangement was concluded whereby Father Coughlin should broadcast over the single station, WJR.

The early broadcast sermons dealt largely with moral questions. But from the very first Father Coughlin's shrewd knowledge of the technique of mass appeal was apparent. It remained only to perfect that technique over the radio: building to a smashing emotional climax; exploitation of the sentiment inherent in the situation of war veteran and war orphan; invective and irony charged with fury. Above all, Father Coughlin showed himself to be astute in building his plot around a single villain or group of villains, reducing abstract social and moral questions to these individual villainies. His local popularity won him the privilege of chain broadcasting. Out of the welter of crooners and blurbsters on the air came a voice, a compelling and dramatic voice, that said harsh things about Morgan, Hoover, Mellon, prohibition, the bankers. He gave expression to the inarticulate discontent of thousands upon thousands of Americans. People began to say, "You know this fellow, Coughlin, he's getting pretty close to the truth." A few of his listeners, who were aware that his economics were vague or curiously distorted, resented his florid emotionalism and, dialing him off the radio, put him down with Huey Long as a rabble rouser. But he was not addressing them.

He was speaking to the great middle class. The response of this public has been amazing. The hourly Sunday broadcast, paid for at full commercial rates, costs $14,000 for relaying over telephone wires and rebroadcasting over the various stations that make up Father Coughlin's own chain. Stenographic and printing costs add another three to four thousand dollars a week. The Shrine of the Little Flower, with the basilica to seat three thousand now being completed adjoining the present structure, paid for in part from the contributions of the radio audience, will cost well over a million. Besides this, he has given substantial sums to charity.

All this revenue must come from his public. During the series of broadcasts, receipts frequently run considerably over $20,000 a week. Contributions are never openly solicited. They are for the most part in such small amounts that Father Coughlin has occasionally banked at one time as many as 20,000 one-dollar bills. While the ratio of Catholic, Jewish and Protestant contributors is not known, obviously not all are Catholics.

As the result of a single broadcast Father Coughlin has received 1,250,000 letters. In the week following the New York speech in which he attacked Al Smith, he received 600,000 letters. Tabulation showed, according to Father Coughlin, one letter in favor of Al Smith to six thousand in favor of the Radio Priest. But he adds that this does not necessarily represent a cross-section of public opinion since it is his experience that persons

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who are opposed to him are not nearly so likely to write as those who approve. The capacity of the stenographic force is 30,000 replies a day: mimeographed thanks for donations; certificates of membership in the Radio League of the Little Flower; Father Coughlin's printed addresses, accompanied by form letters urging appeals to Congress in support of Father Coughlin's views.

The mail requiring his personal attention Father Coughlin answers with the aid of four secretaries who have their offices with him in the seven-story tower of the Shrine. In the tower he can shut himself away completely for as long as several days. It is equipped with shower-bath, sleeping room, small kitchen with electric refrigerator, a telephone on which he may make outside calls, but on which no one can reach him.

There are widespread rumors as to his power. A legation in Washington sent an attaché to Royal Oak to talk to Father Coughlin under the impression that he spoke for President Roosevelt. He explains that he is not necessarily "pro-Roosevelt" but rather "pro-New Deal," citing his attack early in the Roosevelt administration on the personnel and policies of the Treasury Department. Of course, he is a friend of the President, and has been since Roosevelt was Governor of New York. "But I told him last March 4, 'You won't see me any more. This Roman collar won't do you any good around the White House.'" He believes that the New Deal has only made a start in the direction of shorter hours, higher wages, cheaper money, a general redistribution of the nation's wealth.

Only the Tories whom he denounces could mistake Father Coughlin for a radical. He has rejected Socialism and, it is hardly necessary to add, denounced Communism. His views on birth control are reactionary even for the Catholic Church. At the hearings on the Pierce Bill in Washington recently he declared that there were "not enough hungry mouths to consume the surplus in this country." He thus ignored the efforts of a group in the Church who are seeking a way out of the birth-control dilemma, frankly recognizing that large numbers of Catholics are practising contraception. Too, he was inconsistent with the view, often expressed in relation to prohibition, that the individual should be free to decide moral issues for himself. Early in his career he directed violent attacks against Dr. Clarence H. Little, then president of the University of Michigan, for his sponsorship of the birth-control movement, and today he takes upon himself a large share of the responsibility for the fact that Dr. Little was forced to resign. Professor William Ellery Leonard of the University of Wisconsin he attacked as "the defender of the virtue of fornication," and Bertrand Russell, too, he has denounced.

The official biography, written by a lay Catholic in Detroit and sanctioned by Bishop Gallagher, records many attempts to stop Father Coughlin. An unnamed industrialist is said to have approached the Bishop with the veiled threat of dismissal for all Catholic employees unless the tone of the radio addresses was made more moderate. A black-powder bomb was exploded in the basement of the small, white-frame bungalow in which Father Coughlin lives. Undoubtedly pressure has been brought to bear, for Father Coughlin has attacked by name rich Catholics as well as rich Protestants and rich Jews.

Bishop Gallagher, who has the face of a benign old saint beneath a halo of silvery hair, has repeatedly confirmed Father Coughlin's orthodoxy. He has said that he himself would not go so far in blaming the heads of great corporations for the acts of those corporations. But in general he has found Father Coughlin's economic views in conformity with the moral doctrines of the Church. Customarily he reads the radio sermons before they are delivered, but sometimes when he is unable to read them they are broadcast without his official approval. Bishop and priest understand each other. Thus, the Bishop says, Father Coughlin would probably not attempt to comment in any way on the child-labor amendment, since the Church holds that it usurps unwarranted power over the child. Under canon law Bishop Gallagher is the only person with authority over the priests in his diocese.

From Sunday to Sunday Father Coughlin's technique on the radio remains pretty much the same. One of his chief characteristics is a disarming directness. In politics? Of course, inasmuch as he is a priest concerned with questions of morality, of which economics is one; and since economics has become in the past three years a part of politics. A demagogue? Yes, "a leader of the masses."

While his is perhaps largely a personal success, it has a broader significance. He has shown what a Catholic priest can do with the modern instruments of propaganda. He is at home in the modern world. He drives his own car, fast and well. The basilica of his new church, in large part his own conception, is radical in design.

Above all, Father Coughlin is a going concern, with apparently every intention of continuing as a radio star. To pay for his time on the air he must receive revenue and to receive revenue he must win his listeners. It is quite obvious that the country will hear more and more from Father Coughlin. As his biographer is at pains to point out, he has already preached to more people than heard all of Christ's disciples. Enjoying great power, with an unerring sense of mass appeal, he is plainly not ready to give up the position he has won.

Working tirelessly himself, he speaks with brief contempt of parish priests who carry on the work of their parish on one day of the week and have time to loaf the other six days. Sunday, when he reads one or two masses, preaches the sermons at six or seven masses, besides his broadcast sermon, receives the lame, the halt, the blind and the poor, is only the climax of Father Coughlin's week. This priest may be a forerunner of the New Deal in the Catholic Church. MARQUIS W. CHILDS.

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The Meaning of C. K. Ogden

AT LEAST one way to reach simplification is through super-complexity. Russell tells us of a modern mathematical theorist who holds that whole regions of the most abstruse mathematical speculation can be reduced to three underlying signs: a sign for number, a sign for zero, and a sign for "comes after." C. K. Ogden is a typical instance of this same attitude: an interest in resimplification, arising from a full exposure to the subtleties of the extremely complex. The library that he edits, The International Library of Psychology, Philosophy and Scientific Method, is constantly characterized by this dual tendency: it attempts to get at fundamentals through exposure to the full elaborateness of the superstructures rising above these fundamentals. In Ogden's own works we have on the one side "The Meaning of Meaning." Written in collaboration with I. A. Richards, it brings up the dismaying number of "problems" involved in the attempt of one man to inform another that "King Charles I died in his bed" or "King Charles I died on the scaffold." On this same side we have his editing of Bentham's "Theory of Fictions," with its profound and provocative insights into the nature of speech. And on the other side we have his attempts to invent a simplified version of English, with a general working vocabulary of only 850 words, and the sweeping elimination of all but eighteen verbs. The project is explained in his recent volume, "The System of Basic English" (Harcourt), in which this vastly equipped savant gets down to writing "A ball is round. Words are signs. The cows are married. The last example was foolish."

Most readers, I think, will find the simplificatory Ogden the more winsome. And I know of no poem written at the height of Dadaism that combines the suggestiveness and poignancy of this little jingle, which Ogden wrote to assist the students of his revised English in learning the set of opposites:

Sweet-bitter, wide-narrow, quick-slow,
Thick-thin, living-dead, any-no,
Shut-open, first-last,
Great-small, future-past,
Cheap-dear, late-early, high-low.

Hard-soft, simple-complex, black-white,
Red-green, public-private, wrong-right,
Left-right, feeble-strong,
Rough-smooth, short and long,
Solid-hollow, male-female, loose-tight.

Wise-foolish, bent-straight, old and new,
Warm-cold, cruel-kind, false and true,
Bright-dark, happy-sad,
Clean-dirty, good-bad,
Loud-quiet, wet-dry, yellow-blue.

Basic English is "an attempt to give to everyone a second or international language, which will take as little of the learner's time as possible." Ogden estimates that an adequate working knowledge of this medium can be acquired in thirty hours, and that its few words "can do all the work of 20,000." Unlike most projects for an international speech, it is not a new tongue, but a selection from the most serviceable resources of a language already established in all parts of the world. This is the inventor's "talking point."

The earliest projects for a universal linguistic medium were extremely artificial affairs, with signs developed somewhat like the cataloguing system of a library, or like the categories in a Roget's thesaurus. Often they were mere number-systems and could not be pronounced at all as words, being based upon an elaborate classification by genus and differentia whereby one tracked down his meanings as in the game of "Twenty Questions." The first number in the code would indicate whether it was "animal, vegetable or mineral," the second number would narrow the range still further—and so on until, by the judicious assembling of a dozen or so numerals, a good stylist might get to the word "boy."

At this stage the possibility of a world speech was obviously confined to philosophers, even to one philosopher. The first project to catch the public fancy was Volapük. It was unnecessarily elaborate, with a grammar as complex as Latin; yet it did have the advantage of being built in keeping with the patterns of actual speech. Volapük was replaced by Esperanto, an astounding step in advance. A simple and flexible medium, it had recruited a large following before the outbreak of the World War, and is still struggling to regain the hold it lost when the "peace language" was so mortally ridiculed by the very orgy of violence it had been designed to prevent. Zamenhof was unquestionably a philological poet: and the strong emotionality at the root of his inventive genius resulted in the formation of a language structure to which one can very easily become sympathetically attached. Behind Esperanto there is an *"Esperantismo,"* which is to say that Esperanto has the vibrancy of a work of art. However, even Esperanto, pliant and expressive as it can be, carries a large burden of inflections and affixes. These run counter to the analytic trend of language and violate the language-patterns prevailing in large areas of the world such as China and Africa—and the mathematician Peano was perhaps moving in the direction of Basic when he offered his highly simplified Latino Sine Flexione, a modernized Latin with grammatical details reduced to a minimum. Peano admits

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the entire Latin vocabulary, however, simply getting the form of his nouns from the ablative case of orthodox Latin. And whereas he eradicates the complexities of Latin conjugation, he retains the thousands of verbs that Ogden, with remarkable insight, has been able to omit entirely.

For general purposes, the vocabulary of Basic is restricted to 600 nouns, 150 adjectives and 100 other roots (prepositions, verbs, adverbs, demonstratives, etc.). Verbs are reduced to a minimum, the eighteen "operators": come, get, give, go, keep, let, make, put, seem, take, be, do, have, say, see, send, may and will. Thus, most of the operations indicated by verbs in standard English are expressed by a combination of verb and noun, as: "to walk" would become "to take a walk," "to weigh" might be said "to get the weight of" or "to find the weight of," and "to protest" could be "to make a protest." In Basic one does not "disembark"—one "gets off a ship." One does not "insert a coin"—one must "put money in." Also, the nouns can be modified somewhat, as there are simple rules whereby "design" can be turned into "designer," "designing" and "designed." The word order is fixed, obeying always the pattern of the sentence, "I will put the record on the machine now." As for the result, "To the eye and ear it will not seem in any way different from normal English, which is now the language of 500,000,000 persons." And if one selects an idea, at random, then runs through the Basic list of nouns and modifiers, he will be surprised to find how cunningly the vocabulary has been chosen so that, by combination with one or another of the eighteen monosyllabic "operators," the meaning can be conveyed quite adequately. For any specific discipline (politics, astronomy, biology or cooking) there must be added another hundred words or so peculiar to that discipline.

To read a translation into Basic done by one who has made himself at home in this medium, is to note not only an exceptional fluency and spontaneity, but also a peculiar sharpness, probably resulting from the fact that so many ideas are expressed by analysis or definition. A style written in such a frame of mind, you can depend upon it, is a busy one. Masterpieces in Basic will bristle (and, incidentally, they will expose the vocabulary of a John Herrmann or a Josephine Herbst as a rank, luxuriant overgrowth, while Hemingway becomes a verbose old drone). And as might be expected, Ogden often cites American slang with approval.

Any who are interested in a test of Basic as a medium for belles lettres may be referred to the translation of "Carl and Anna," by L. W. Lockhart. In Ogden's own book there is also a vast variety of examples illustrating the serviceability of the medium in fiction, the sciences, religion, travel, politics, business, everyday life, radio, newspapers and motion pictures. The book of "The Making of the Earth" begins:

> 1. First, God made the heaven and the earth.
>
> 2. And the earth was without form, and there was nothing in it; and the dark was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.
>
> 14. And God said, Let there be lights in the sky of the heaven to make a division between the day and the night; and let them be for signs, and for the changes of the year, and for days, and for years. . . .

It is not our purpose here to attempt deciding whether Basic meets all the requirements of an international language. Ogden has assembled favorable testimony from a wide variety of sources—but the question still remains whether "debabelization" will be accomplished by the voluntary adoption of a national tongue. The almost inevitable tendency to tie up the destiny of the project with commercial interests can serve both for and against it. Already the Japanese, who were delighted with a brand of English so much more easily mastered than the orthodox speech, are reported to have grown distrustful of its possibilities as an aid to the economic expansion of English-speaking merchants.

After experimenting with idioms "for more than two years," Ogden found that there are only about five hundred essential ones. Two hundred and fifty of these are necessary for working purposes, though "only fifty are recommended to the learner's attention before the stage of literary effort is reached." As for the other two hundred fifty, English and American translators need not avoid them, "because (although unnecessary for the learner) they would for the most part be intelligible from the context." On seeing a language reduced so much, it is hard to resist the desire to see it reduced still further, as could be done by restricting the operators and prepositions to specific logical functions, permitting all the words in the vocabulary to be extended by "er," "ed" and "ing" regardless of standard English usage, and completely regularizing the conjugations, whereby international Basic would become a kind of pidgin Oxford, somewhat new to English speakers as well as to others. But of course, if the simplification process were carried so far, Basic would be *international* only, and would lack the *intranational* features that it now possesses and that make it possible for one to address a man in Basic without his even being aware of the fact.

Yet it seems that a "Pidgin Basic" could be more easily mastered by English-speaking peoples, since it would greatly assist in blocking off the Basic vocabulary from the other words in the language. We learn, for instance, how to block off our oaths, and avoid them on occasion, because they have a distinctive mark about them. But it would be extremely difficult, when speaking to a Dutchman, to remind oneself that such words as *quantity, accuracy, cancellation, prohibition, crop report, forecast, acquittal, attendance, dissent, objection, pavement, rage, service,* are "Basically" taboo. It is possible that a vocabulary of a thousand partially distorted Eng-

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lish words would be more conveniently set aside as "Basic," and that the assigning of sharp logical functions to our operators and prepositions, regardless of "taste," would further assist in isolating the international vocabulary from the vernacular. Otherwise it is much easier for us to master a thousand words of Basic French or German or Eskimo, than to acquire the art of dispensing with so many simple words that we naturally use. In any event, Ogden does not offer his language as a rigidly completed product, but as a working plan open to modification and development as needs are revealed by test. And he holds that a great latitude of idiomatic error is possible without impairing the intelligibility of the medium.

However slight may be one's interest in the possibility of trimming down English for world usage (and Ogden has even suggested that the Soviet Union should adopt it for handling the multitude of languages within its borders), I think that his recent volume, "The System of Basic English," should attract more readers than those who would like to converse in English with South Americans and Trobriand Islanders. I think that the work throws much light upon the "essence" or "genius" of our language, and could very well have an effect upon standard English style.

So much for the simplification aspect of Ogden's researches. "The Meaning of Meaning," written in collaboration with the author of "Principles of Literary Criticism," is an exhaustive attempt to define the nature of communication. It "discards mystical relations between the knower and the known and treats knowledge as a causal affair open to ordinary scientific investigation." There is a certain line of speculation and investigation that might be traced through nominalism, empiricism, utilitarianism, phenomenalism, pragmatism, ending perhaps in the thoroughly psychological approaches of behaviorism and the Gestalt theories. In one respect this line might be described as a gradual divorce from the belief in "pure" knowledge, from that conception of philosophy as Olympian contemplation which Marxians often hold to have arisen out of the fact that the Greeks were slave-owners. In this line we should situate "The Meaning of Meaning."

At the close of the volume, after the authors have carried us through 450 pages of very rigorous investigation into the genius of speech and the way it affects our thinking, they grow somewhat hugely playful, summarizing their work in "a little fable concerning Amœba." In part it runs:

> "Realize thyself, Amœba dear," said Will: and Amœba realized herself. . . . And in the latter days Homo appeared. How, he knew not; and Homo called the change Progress, and the How he called God . . . for speech was ever a Comforter. And when Homo came to study the parts of speech, he wove himself a noose of Words. And he hearkened to himself, and bowed his head and made abstractions, hypostatizing and glorifying. Thus arose Church and State and Strife upon the Earth; for oftentimes Homo caused Hominem to die for Abstractions hypostatized and glorified: and the children did after the manner of their fathers, for so had they been taught. And last of all Homo began also to eat his words.

If we were to attempt characterizing in one sentence the purpose to which Mr. Ogden has devoted the best of his efforts, we might say that he has been concerned with teaching us how to prepare and consume our words without the sufferings of a bad diet.

It is an important purpose. Language is the basic instrument by which social relationships are managed. How, without the miraculous services of language, could our people be expected to know whether several vague millions of Frenchmen or Germans or Japanese, thousands of miles away, happened at a given time in our history to be our *friends* or our *enemies?* How, without language to hypostatize and glorify, could "Aryans" distinguish themselves from "Jews" so accurately that they would rather be swindled by fellow Aryans than make an alignment with Jews as badly off as themselves? How, but by a naïveté of interpretation (and language is the great medium of interpretation), can Poor Whites maintain a tremendously important line between their interests and the interests of Negroes, while upholding an equally flimsy classification that throws Poor Whites and Propertied Whites together? Is it not vastly important for the critic to have at his disposal a machinery for shattering such persuasive formulas as "sanctity of contract," "a fair return on one's investment," a "New Deal," and "the Law"?

If language is the fundamental instrument of human coöperation, and if there is an "organic flaw" in the nature of language, we may well expect to find this organic flaw revealing itself throughout the texture of society. If the "nature of our thinking is determined by the nature of our productive forces," it becomes vitally necessary to consider what part the genius of man's key productive force, language, has played in determining the nature of his thinking, his notions as to what "real issues" are, and thence his ways of dealing with them.

For such reasons, a thoroughly documented technique of linguistic skepticism might be considered as essential to human welfare as any single line of inquiry. Ogden would see the world made "word conscious"—and to this end, with whatever sort of material he is dealing, he eventually brings it around to problems of *symbolism*, questions of *reference*, tactics of *communication*. In his "Meaning of Psychology" he writes:

> Every statement is translatable, and translation should form the chief part of intellectual training at all stages; not only translation from foreign languages into our own, though this is at present probably the most valuable part of the general curriculum, but also, still more urgently, translation from one formulation to another within the bounds of our native tongue. By this means we may best become word-conscious, that is,

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become able to look beyond our forms of speech to the things we are talking about. A truly sagacious Dictator would make it his first business to create a Word-conscious Proletariat.

I do not, for one moment, expect to see all mankind patiently laboring over Ogden and Richards' Bentham-inspired data on "word magic," the "canons of symbolism," the "theory of definition" with warnings as to Phonetic, Hypostatic and Utraquistic Subterfuges, the matter on "sign-situations" and "symbol-situations," the sharp and often comical illustrations of their thesis by analysis of such philosophic "weasel words" as "beauty" and "meaning," and the indications as to how man likes to write his grammars into the very structure of the universe. "The Meaning of Meaning" is primarily the description of a *method*—or perhaps better, the embodiment of an *attitude:* and this method, or attitude, can be turned, *mutatis mutandis,* into any kind of subject matter. This fertile work on interpretation and translation would itself have to be reinterpreted and translated by men of a different order and of diverse interests before it could fully serve the social ends for which it is specifically designed. It would require new Kiplings who, weary of the old adventures in nationalistic heroism, would give saliency this time to the study of human error *as error* and not *as nobility.* We have reached a point in culture where our speech, which evolved out of use, must be made still more useful—otherwise it will continue to serve best the needs of salesmanship, political landslides, wars and Hitlerite "sanitation."

KENNETH BURKE.

Fascism in Great Britain

IN ARRIVING at an estimate of the present strength and future prospects of British fascism, several factors have to be taken into consideration. At its inception, the British Union of Fascists was neglected, and probably consciously boycotted, by the capitalist press. The British bourgeoisie at that time saw no need for a fascist movement and was inclined to discount the possibility of fascism's being of service to it. This, however, was not the view taken by certain important individual capitalists, for Mosley was able to raise important funds.

The expenditure of these funds with the usual fascist lavishness enabled Mosley to build up the skeleton of a national organization with branches in nearly all important centers of population, and to hold large-scale public meetings. The establishment of this new organization all over the country, without there being any mention of it in the press, naturally aroused popular interest and excitement. As no accurate information on the real strength of the Fascists was available, public opinion swerved violently from great underestimation to as great overestimation. The neglect by the press became a very definite asset for Mosley. It gave his organization an air of mystery, of conspiracy. Rumors of there being already half a million members of the Fascist party began to circulate. They were carefully fostered from Fascist headquarters.

The real facts, however, are not in doubt. Indeed, in Fleet Street any editor can discover all the facts and figures about the British Fascists, or even gain possession of the most confidential documents. Fleet Street is today besieged by impecunious members of the Fascist party who are more than willing to sell both information and the confidential documents of their party for a very modest sum. The real membership of the Fascist party is 17,500, not 500,000. This figure is for real paying members, "good on the books." While, in view of the widespread activities and really huge expenditure of the Fascists this winter, it is by no means large, it is not altogether negligible. For the possession of 17,500 actual paying members means that the Fascists have very much wider contacts of a looser kind. It is estimated by an authority who has made a special study of the matter that the Fascists have anything up to 100,000 of such looser contacts.

More important, of course, than the number of Fascist supporters is the question of funds. And the one fact that Fleet Street does not know about the Fascists, because this fact is never revealed to the members of the Fascist party themselves, is the extent and source of present funds. But the magnitude of these funds was revealed during the late autumn of last year and in the early months of this year. These months seem to have marked the peak of Fascist activity. At that time, very large public meetings were held, one, for example, in Manchester, and another in Birmingham. Expensive halls were rented and the meetings widely advertised. But on top of this normally quite considerable expense, anywhere from 500 to 1,000 uniformed Fascists were brought long distances to the meetings. It is said that some 500 Fascists were brought from London to Manchester for the Manchester meeting and a like number to Birmingham. A simple arithmetical computation shows that when the fares and keep of these Fascists are reckoned, each of these meetings must have cost nearer £2,000 than £1,000. The expenses of fascist propaganda are all on this lavish scale.

At the moment, however, the Fascists seem considerably less active. Both public and personal reasons may cause this. The revival in trade, however negligible it is for the British workers, is quite con-

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siderable for the British capitalists. It is really a revival in profits rather than a revival in trade. This has probably damped the ardor of some of Mosley's backers, by making them feel that after all they have no need of his thugs. Again, Mosley himself has been unwell. He has had a renewed attack of phlebitis, which he gets from time to time, probably as a result of a leg injury received in the War. He has been compelled to go away to France to recuperate.

Thus, Mosley's associates are left to carry on his party. Of the original group that founded the new party, only two, Dr. Forgan and Mr. Allan, are left. Forgan is a doctor of medicine, and was Labor M.P. for East Renfrewshire, a county constituency of western Scotland, in the 1929 Parliament. I do not know what are Forgan's exact functions in the Fascist Brown House at Chelsea. Forgan is a capable, industrious and reliable Scot, but his talents are pedestrian. Dr. Forgan is no Dr. Göbbels. He will never be able to organize the propaganda of the British Fascists with the reckless brilliance that Göbbels achieved in Germany.

Mr. Allan is a very different type. Allan was an Ulster Conservative M.P. in the 1929 House. He is an adventurous, irresponsible and intelligent Irishman. He has spent many years in the Caucasus studying the Georgian nation, on whose history he has written a large volume. He is a sincere romantic, unable and unwilling to see that Fascism, whatever it says, *is* always nothing else but the prætorian guard of monopoly capitalism. He is sharply aware of the break-up of capitalism. But he deludes himself into supposing that the Fascists will somehow or other get the capitalists to finance their own destruction. He turns a blind eye to the fact that the Nazis have not lifted a finger to carry out one of their anti-capitalist promises, but have remained the most faithful employees imaginable of Herr Thyssen and the reigning group of German capitalists. Allan will give a useful façade of theory to the British fascist movement, which as yet appears rather nakedly pro-capitalist. (It is an amusing irony that the one recruit which fascism has so far won from the Conservative party should be its most left-wing member.)

But Allan also is unlikely to play the part of Göbbels, the master propagandist. His business interests, it is true, are useful. His family owns a large firm of billposters, which fill the hoarding spaces in western Scotland and northern Ireland. But there is a good deal of the romantic and the dilettante about him. One cannot imagine his displaying the unremitting professional application needed in a master propagandist. Moreover, though he writes well, he is unable to speak or lecture at all fluently. Allan has recently produced the first presentable book on British fascism. For some reason best known to himself, he writes this book under the pseudonym of James Drennan. It is an artfully concealed eulogy of Mosley, combined with a strange hash of Spenglerian philosophy and history.

The historical and philosophical part of Allan's book is flavored with shreds of second-hand Marxism. For, in a dim sort of way, the Fascists accept Marx's prediction that the human race is now faced with the alternative of socialism or barbarism and they have unhesitatingly chosen barbarism! Allan writes:

> Sir Herbert Samuel, a Liberal of singular perspicacity, believes that Europe is returning to the conditions of the twelfth century. Professor Laski wails against those new men, who have "no inhibitions." The oligarchs and the democrats dread this classic figure more than anarchy—for it is the figure of the Leader, the natural aristocrat, whom they have thought long dead and buried in the obloquy of Whig history. It showed in the heavy frame of Rhodes, and may have stirred in Edward Carson, but those men were born too early. Now it comes out into the stark day—in the grim serenity of Mussolini, in the harsh force of Hitler. And behind them stride the eternal condottieri—the gallant, vivid Balbo, the ruthless Göring.

No one can disagree with this vivid passage. It is perfectly true that fascism is recreating the conditions and personalities of the dark ages. Balbo and Göring are condottieri and nothing else. And so, for that matter, are Hitler and Mussolini. And unless they are overthrown they will produce the chaos, the ruin, the dirt, the squalor, the ignorance and the superstition, the dark night of twelfth-century Europe.

Such, briefly, are the facts of the present position of the British Union of Fascists. What, however, are its prospects? On this question we can, of course, only lay down very general principles. There is no doubt that as and when the crisis deepens, which it assuredly will, more and more capitalist support will come to the Fascists. Already the powerful Rothermere press has been opened to Fascist articles. This will place vast funds at the disposal of Mosley, who will use them for lavish and spectacular propaganda. There seems little doubt that he will recruit important sections of the lower middle class to his standards. Hence, the growth of fascism in Great Britain is entirely inevitable. But will this growth be sufficient for Mosley to claim, with any prospect of success, the leadership of the British capitalist class? In essence the answer to this question depends upon what leadership is followed by the British working class. If the British working class continues until the end to follow its present social-democratic leaders, continues to entertain the blind delusions of "gradualism," then undoubtedly British fascism stands a chance of obtaining power. If, however, a decisive section of the British working class breaks away and follows the revolutionary leadership, then there will be no possibility of a fascist regime in Britain.

JOHN STRACHEY.

London.

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How to Meet the Milk Crisis

SINCE the A.A.A. announced its emergency proposal to cut milk production I have heard four administrative spokesmen make radio explanations of and apologies for this new plan; I have reviewed all available data; and I have heard Secretary Wallace make his address to the regional meeting of milk farmers in Philadelphia, broadcast to simultaneous meetings in Kansas City and Indianapolis. Mr. Wallace's discussion of the milk crisis was so frank, logical and informed that I am forced to pose the problem as he did: The milk situation is in a crisis that demands a choice between sane management and mere props to the profit system.

Mr. Wallace's Program—Mr. Wallace did not, of course, put it that way. Paraphrasing him, we could say: A close study of the dairy problem discloses as nothing else could the interdependence of farm and city. Exports are not a factor, since milk farmers produce almost entirely for domestic consumption. The tariff prevents imports; there is no world price for milk.

It is true that if consumer prices were further reduced, the American people could consume 50 percent more milk than they do now. However, pending developments in more efficient distribution, or pending an increase in city incomes, or both, consumers will ultimately be hurt by any drop in milk prices, since that would, if continued long enough, drive farmers out of production and thereby jeopardize the whole delicate structure of urban fluid-milk service.

For years organized industry has been able to hold down production in order to raise the prices of things farmers must buy. It reached a point at which farm products could buy only half what they could before the War. Dairy farmers form the most important single consumer group in agriculture (not numerically but in cash income). They get a fourth of all farm income, but in 1932 they got $860,000,000 less than in 1920.

When industry decided to cut production, and thus threw twelve millions out of work, the dairy farmer was hit squarely between the eyes. His cash income has always fluctuated directly with changes in total factory pay rolls. In some regions milk farmers have been getting less than two cents a quart. With the present consumer buying power we have three million "surplus" cows. The normal seasonal increase in milk production is just ahead. To prevent the dairy chaos that threatens we must immediately decide on some scheme for holding production down to the winter level. We must cut production ten percent. Thus Mr. Wallace.

We are told by another official that this reduction can be accomplished by transferring cows from grain to roughage, by raising fewer heifers to maturity, by breeding heifers later, feeding more milk to farm animals, and by culling the herds of low-producing cows. Farmers are warned, however, not to upset the beef market by culling too suddenly.

But milk is also a food. Nothing in this plan considers that the American diet lacks calcium. We have it on the best authority that it lacks calcium apparently more than it lacks anything else, vitamin or mineral. Now every school child knows that the chief source of calcium is milk. Every school child knows that he should drink a quart of milk a day, though many children do not get any. School children are taught every day about their vitamins and minerals. They are told that milk builds strong bones and sound teeth. They are told that milk helps them to throw off germs. They are not told that the average American drinks less than a pint of milk a day, that less than a daily pint of fluid milk is *produced* for the average American to drink.

The Flaw in Process Taxes.—In abandoning the milk market agreements now in effect, the administration says it can no longer attempt to "guarantee fair returns to distributors." Several spokesmen, including Mr. Wallace, recognize distributors' margins as excessive. The present program has failed because, as the Secretary says, you cannot enforce minimum prices either to farmers or consumers in any milkshed while surplus milk is flowing in from outside the shed.

Now when the A.A.A. decided last spring to impose taxes on farm products at first point of processing, in order to return cash benefits to farmers, it was hoped that all or part of these taxes would be absorbed in the murky, myriad "channels of distribution." It was vigorously denied that a processing tax is simply a concealed sales tax. In its recent administrative report the A.A.A. now admits that not one of its processing taxes has been borne in any part by processors or distributors.

In cotton and wheat the consumer has paid the tax. In pork, the consumer, by shifting to beef and poultry, refused to pay it; leaving the farmer to pay it in lower hog prices, thus evening his other benefits. Since consumers cannot shift from milk to some equivalent, the administration trusts that the consumer will take it. If he cuts consumption instead, the milk program will tailspin into a series of familiar vicious spirals in which buying power always falls faster than prices. A ten-percent cut in milk production now is likely to produce a five or ten-percent price increase to the consumers of dairy products, thus curtailing consumption and necessitating another production cut in the future.

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The A.A.A. can only pin its hopes on P.W.A., federal relief and other measures presumably designed to increase purchasing power. We are told that as soon as purchasing power warrants it, production levels will be restored. Yet is it not obvious that as long as farm relief comes entirely out of the pockets of wage and small-salary earners instead of from processors' and distributors' excess margins, consumer purchasing power is further crippled and recovery so much delayed? In the meantime, a recent report of the Consumers' Board of the N.R.A. states that so far the New Deal has reduced rather than increased purchasing power. Small increases in wages and farm income have been more than offset by higher retail prices.

Making the Consumer Pay.—Prices of milk products to the consumer are to be raised under the new plan in two ways, by the limitation of supply and by a processing tax. We are being told that this will mean only a half-cent per quart rise in the retail price of fluid milk. Yet we know that processing taxes on wheat and cotton have often served the textile and baking industries as a good excuse for raising their retail prices far beyond any real costs added by the tax or N.R.A. wages. We have no assurance that the same use will not be made of the tax on butter fat. The administration says it will set no maximum milk prices to consumers unless specifically asked to do so by local boards with consumer representation. We can only hope that such boards will function more promptly than have the local labor boards.

Only about half of all milk produced is used as fluid milk for human consumption. To double our fluid-milk consumption—that is, for Americans to drink as much as the human body requires for optimum growth and maintenance—does not require doubling the amounts made into butter and other dairy products. A 50-percent increase in production would just about bring our fluid-milk supply up to an adequate standard. The proposed reductions in output would come not out of the fluid-milk market but out of the half of total production that goes into butter, cheese, ice cream—the half for which farmers get much lower prices than for fluid milk.

Stabilization by Undernourishment.—We are told that milk for drinking will be as plentiful as before. Milk *available* for drinking may be as plentiful (still only half what it should be), but unless the administration goes in for greatly increased buying for relief distribution, total milk consumption will decline under even slight price increases. It may be supposed that because milk is, or should be, an essential, families will continue to purchase higher-priced milk and butter at old rates of consumption. However, specific studies have shown that every time the price of milk goes up one cent a quart thousands of families buy less milk. Cheap, high-calory foods can easily be substituted for more expensive, low-calory, protective foods—milk, lean meat and green vegetables. Many families will economize on food before they will cut down on cigarettes, cosmetics, movies or many other items usually spoken of and taxed as luxury goods but goods that for large parts of the urban population have come to be psychologically necessary. So long as from 17 to 55 percent of all American children remain undernourished (according to the varying estimates of pre-depression studies), it will be disastrous to wait for increased purchasing power to increase milk consumption.

Mr. Wallace says the milk farmer has no control over consumer purchasing power. This is begging the question. According to New Deal statutes, Mr. Wallace's administration has clear authority to increase buying power. It has simply not chosen to use it. The A.A.A. can compel much more efficient distribution. "Half a dozen milk trucks delivering on the same street" has long been the classic textbook example of the absurd inefficiency of our retail system. The A.A.A. has power to cut distributors' admittedly excessive profit margins.

Evidently the A.A.A. prefers to cut purchasing power. Mr. Wallace states that if processor-distributors' margins were everywhere reduced to a "fair return," only about half a cent a quart could thereby be restored to farmers. Now this happens to be exactly the extra amount we are told consumers must pay. If someone must pay it, if the farmer is to get only that amount anyway, then the plain issue becomes: will the A.A.A. force this farm subsidy from wages or from excess profits? Why has no processing tax yet been absorbed by processors? Why will no processing tax ever be absorbed?

Regulation versus Restriction.—If milk were made a public utility, as Mr. Wallace at one time led us to hope it might be, the government would be forced, he says now, to regulate capitalization, rates of return and quality of service. Well, why not? If regulation failed with milk as with other utilities, outright social management would become necessary and it would certainly be far less expensive to the public than regulation that fails to regulate. It is obvious that the milk farmer cannot continue producing for a price below costs; it is obvious that he must be helped. But need he be subsidized? Surely only an inefficient and unfair distributing system demands that any necessary commodity be permanently subsidized. Instead of paying the farmer to produce less milk, we should be paying him to produce more. Why not grasp this very emergency as the golden opportunity to approach civilized standards of milk consumption?

How can it be done? By reorganizing the cooperatives. Their integrity has been challenged by the farmers themselves, but when a coöperative fails to make a fair return to its members and at the same time holds up consumers, you may be sure that one or all of the cardinal principles of coöperative, as opposed to corporation, management have been

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violated. Placing consumers on milk boards is a good idea, but consumers alone are helpless in the face of corporation tactics. Government cannot evade its responsibility.

Milk Is for Drinking.—Hand in hand with a threefold program—investigation of metropolitan coöperatives, formation of real farmer-owned coöperatives everywhere, and more efficient distribution—there should go a nationwide campaign to increase milk drinking. Every child should be guaranteed a quart of milk a day. If his family cannot pay for it, he should get it at school, nursery school or public milk station. The $5,000,000 now proposed to buy milk for underfed children is a mere drop in the national milk pail, which is worth, even in 1932, $985,000,000. Assuming that a fifth of our children under ten are definitely undernourished, a very conservative estimate, $5,000,000 would not buy five million children a year's milk supply.

The $5,000,000 proposed for transferring surplus cows from dairy regions to poor, non-dairy farm families, if used as loans to dairymen, would buy a lot of cows. But it will not buy the three million cows now needed by at least half the Southern farms. (For a year-round milk supply each farm needs two cows.) To finance the buying and feeding of cows on tenant farms will be a big job, but it should not prove too big.

That another $5,000,000 will go for the eradication of bovine tuberculosis is excellent. The elimination of our 600,000 tubercular cattle in one year would, according to the A.A.A., increase the butterfat price half a cent a pound. So much the better. But the report goes on to observe that "in the long run elimination of tuberculosis increases rather than decreases production." For nutritionists it is difficult to feel that this would be unfortunate.

Conclusion.—We must conclude that almost any program would be better than that now proposed for milk-farm relief. Any plan that in any degree cuts a national milk supply, already 50 percent too low, is socially blind. As for those who say that our children are healthy enough, one can only remark, with Dr. Lydia Roberts of the University of Chicago, that many people have never seen a really healthy child.

Any plan is economically futile if it raises consumer prices and finances farm subsidies entirely out of the 90 percent of us whose ever increasing inability to buy is the direct cause of ever increasing farm and factory surplus. The efforts of teachers, parents and nutritionists, plus, in part, the advertising of the milk companies, have made Americans regard the milk cow as our sacred animal and milk as a public utility. Should Secretary Wallace decide to solve the dairy problem in a humanly useful way, the great majority of Americans would be with him. Sooner or later milk must be managed as the public utility we all know it to be.

EMILY WHITE STEVENS.

Washington Notes

Faith Awaits the Works—"Endorsed Unread"—Hope Springs in the Bankers' Hearts—Johnson Doesn't Ease Out Easily

A SHORT time after Mr. Roosevelt got back from his vacation, both the right and left wings in his administration had received from him what they considered encouragement. At this moment, both are waiting action from him that will justify their faith. On the conservative side it is held that Mr. Roosevelt is now prepared to accept drastic modification of the Securities Act, that his weight will be against any further silver legislation, that he will not help restore the Wagner Bill to its original shape and is not concerned about its passage; that he will insist upon some teeth being put back into the Stock Exchange Bill, but by no means wants the complete dental equipment with which it was born. As a matter of fact, it is said that he endorsed this bill without ever having read it. It was the principle with which he was concerned, not the details. It is being pointed out, however, that the details are the things upon which the principle depends, and without the right details the principle is abandoned.

As to the Wagner Bill, there is little doubt that Senator Wagner talked with the President before introducing it and that he believed he would have administration support after it got in. At his conferences with Senators and Representatives, following his return, Mr. Roosevelt evinced no great interest in the bill, and the party leaders left the White House under the impression that this was not a part of the administration program. It could wait. Unlike tariff authority and the Stock Exchange Bill, it has not been put on the list of administration "musts." But, aside from his attitude on these specific proposals, the conservatives here and throughout the country have derived more comfort from the President's supposed feeling about the pending tax bill and his general disposition to retrench.

So far as the tax bill is concerned, it seems well understood that the administration is all for eliminating in conference the Couzens ten-percent amendment and the La Follette increases on estate and surtaxes. In other words, the expectation is that the bill as finally enacted will be about as it originally came from the Senate Finance Committee, the chairman of which, Senator Pat Harrison of Mississippi, was overridden by a combination of progressives and Democrats on the floor.

Even more significant of a swing to the right is the renewed confidence of the would-be budget balancers within the administration. They point out that the President has spent nothing like the amount of money he proposed at the beginning of this session, that the deficit at the close of the year will be hardly more than four billions, instead of the seven forecast in the budget message, that the President purposely made the financial situation of the Treasury look very much worse in that message than it really is. By curtailment of public-works plans and by a general policy of retrenchment, the budget can be balanced by 1936.

A few weeks ago, the conservative group had no such hope. On the contrary, they had thrown up their hands

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and were regarding the future with the greatest alarm. Since Roosevelt's return they have again taken heart and are convinced that, despite his dashes to the left, the President is really a canny conservative at heart, and can be depended upon "not to go too far." Such is the talk, and beyond doubt there is some foundation for the feeling of the Douglases and the Joneses. On the other hand, the President has given distinct assurances to the liberals that he by no means regards the emergency as over, that the experiments upon which he has embarked are not to be abandoned just because of Wall Street and business opposition.

The progressives are thoroughly determined to have a vote on measures appropriating vastly more than is now proposed, both for relief and public works. It is also extremely probable that the sixteen-to-one Wheeler proposal on silver will go through. To this Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau is opposed. The Senate voted on it early in the session and only three or four votes more would have put it through. I am told that the necessary votes have now been obtained, that the proposal will be offered again as an amendment to the Dies Bill and that there is likelihood of its passage. Probably it will provoke another veto, though this is by no means certain.

As yet, Mr. Roosevelt has given no indication whether he intends to support General Johnson in declining to urge the extension of the licensing feature of the N.R.A. Originally the President had every purpose of asking the extension. Johnson's refusal was based on his fear that, once the lid was taken off and the Act again in the hands of Congress, it would be torn to pieces. Judging from the conversations on the subject I have had with various Senators, these apprehensions are well founded. Neither the attempted reorganization of the N.R.A. nor the proposed revamping of the codes has allayed the hostility in the Senate. Senators Borah and Nye, for example, are still strongly opposed to the whole direction and are entirely unconvinced that anything short of a general change in the N.R.A. management, top and bottom, will bring either order or effectiveness into the organization. Actually, those who feel that the N.R.A. has completely failed to reach its objectives and has operated against the interests of the consumer and the small business man think the elimination of the General would be the best thing that could happen.

General Johnson can no more change his nature than the leopard its spots, and, so long as he is the N.R.A. head, so long will the interests of the larger industries receive greater consideration than they deserve. The General is entirely honest in his convictions, but he is in constant conflict with men, both within and without his organization, who are equally honest in theirs. The idea of the opposition was expressed by Senator Nye in a speech the other day, when he said, in effect, that the N.R.A. would never be a real agency for good until it was under a different management. At the same time, he expressed his belief that the President saw the realities of the situation and would shortly act to bring about a genuine New Deal in the N.R.A. If this means anything, it means the substitution of someone else for Mr. Johnson—and someone other than Mr. Averill Harriman or his West Point classmate, upon both of whom the General seems now to lean and who exercise more power than any other N.R.A. officials. I must say, however, that I do not share Senator Nye's opinion that Mr. Roosevelt has any intention of easing the General out or that the General has any idea of departing.

It is true that at his press conferences a number of times, the General has talked "off the record" of his desire to get back to private life and his old and congenial association with Mr. B. M. Baruch, but he has made no move in that direction and his intimates do not expect any. On the contrary, they think the General is not the man to withdraw while either he or his machine is under fire. Also, they say that to do so now would be to throw the whole business into disorder. And further of course it is practically impossible to get a man equipped to take the job who would satisfy the critics.

I do not pretend to pass upon the soundness of these arguments, but merely point out that, under the General's direction, the campaign for enforcement, with accompanying ballyhoo, is being mapped and will be shortly launched. If one can judge from the tremendous volume of violations under which the Compliance Board is now smothered, it will be a Herculean job. That the President is back of the General in this effort is certain. They both seem to recognize that upon its success depends the life of the experiment. One of the reasons the White House is anxious for a speedy adjournment of Congress is the desirability of getting it out of Washington before the reaction from the enforcement drive is fully felt.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Buying without Money—Van, Van, the Tight-Rope Man—A Pillar of Paper—Protecting Nothing but Water

READERS who have seen the accounts of the indictments in Cleveland of O. P. Van Sweringen and James R. Nutt, former president and then chairman of the board of the Union Trust Company, are perhaps wondering what the indictments are about. Newspaper accounts did not make the matter very clear. Of course, an indictment does not constitute a conviction. What is said here is to explain the transactions as the Grand Jury construed them in returning the indictments.

First it must be understood that for a long time the Union Trust Company was in difficulties and the officers of the bank were resorting to numerous stratagems to conceal the real condition from the depositors and the public. In those days our whole recovery effort was pitched on the theory that the way to get back to health was to conceal from the people the nature and extent of the disease and fool them back to health. The Union Trust Company ran on this policy. Its head was the treasurer of the Republican Campaign Committee. It got funds from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. It juggled its statements. And in the attempt to fool the public it had the collaboration of the R.F.C., the Clearing House of Cleveland and various other banking authorities.

A moment came in September, 1931, when the bank had to make a statement and a report on condition to the State Banking Department of Ohio. The officials wanted to pad

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out the assets of the bank. The method adopted was as follows:

The bank had United States bonds and treasury notes amounting to $12,117,016.83. Most of its other holdings were pretty well frozen. These government obligations were liquid. It wanted to make its liquidity appear stronger. Mr. Nutt went to Mr. O. P. Van Sweringen and asked for aid. The Van Sweringens had on deposit with the Morgans $10,112,540.98 of government bonds. Nutt asked Van Sweringen to sell him those bonds for a few days. If Nutt could buy the bonds without paying any money for them, he could write them into the assets of the bank and thus pad out his liquid security holdings. But how could he buy the bonds from Van Sweringen without paying any money?

That is a little trick that banks can perform without any difficulty. If you borrow money from a bank, the bank does not hand you cash. It gives you a credit on your deposit book and adds the amount of the credit to its deposits. Hence, by taking Van Sweringen's bonds and then merely giving Van Sweringen credit for the purchase price on his deposit book, the bank's liquid assets were increased and the bank's deposits were increased by $10,112,540.98.

When this was accomplished the bank could issue a statement and make a report to the State Banking Department showing government securities in its portfolio of $22,229,557.81 when it really owned only $12,117,016.83 of such obligations. It could show also deposits of $81,796,607.28, when in fact, save for this fictitious transaction, it had only $71,684,066 in deposits. A few days after the statement was made and the public fooled, the transaction was wiped out by the bank's reselling the bonds to Van Sweringen and canceling the deposit.

There was plenty of this sort of thing. The banks in Cleveland and Detroit did it over and over again. The object always was to deceive depositors and the public. But in the end the truth had to come out.

A new forgotten man has been dug up for us. He is the "neglected public-utility investor." The American Federation of Utility Investors, Inc. (not for profit) has raised the standard of revolt and proposes to protect him. What the Federation wants to do is to shield him from lowered rates and laws designed to protect the public from the abuses of utility companies. It is a beautiful crusade, and while we pause to shed one paltry tear over the sufferings of the poor investor, we should like to call attention to a piece of raw bunk that the Federation uses to advance its cause.

In a widely circulated pamphlet it calls attention to the fact that utility securities have been declining while the stocks of railroads and industries have been rising under the influence of the New Deal.

Twenty railroad shares, according to the Dow-Jones averages, rose during 1933 some 61.9 percent in market price. Thirty industrial shares rose 67.2 percent. In the same time twenty utility shares declined 19.5 percent. Why? Because, we are told, the utility industry has not been sharing in recovery; because politicians are attacking the utilities; because of demands for rate reductions, tax exactions, the threat of municipal ownership.

The Federation quotes the Dow-Jones averages to prove that utility shares have declined. But it does not tell us what the shares are. Therein lies the meat in this particular cocoanut. The Dow-Jones averages include not twenty utility companies but twenty utility "holding" companies. Of course those stocks have declined. They have declined, not because the earnings of the operating companies they own have fallen upon evil days but because the shares of these holding companies were sold to the public at outrageous prices. Readers will remember that the Middle West Utilities shares went down to practically nothing though the operating companies indirectly controlled by the Insull holding company were all in a prosperous condition.

The owners of these "utility" stocks are now suffering because of the marauding operations of the promoters who organized these big holding companies, drove the prices of the shares up to ridiculous levels and then unloaded them on the public-utility investor. JOHN T. FLYNN.

On the Labor Front

Government by Ambiguity—Proportional Confusion—Railroad Labor Pays the Freight—"The Laws Is Fulfilled in One Word"

WHEN President Roosevelt's automobile truce was signed a month ago, the predictions were that it would be the source of endless trouble rather than the key to industrial peace. For instead of clarifying and reaffirming the status of organized labor—the one thing that the situation urgently called for—it merely added to the confusion and uncertainty that already existed. To the numerous interpretations of Section 7a it added one more—with the difference that this latest interpretation managed to be even more ambiguous about the rights of collective bargaining and union recognition than any of the earlier ones.

More disconcerting than the ambiguities, however, is the prospect that the so-called basic principles of the automobile agreement will guide the administration's future labor policy. This has already been indicated in the approval by President Roosevelt of a modification in Senator Wagner's Labor Disputes Bill to permit "free" company unions. Senator Wagner has explained this to mean that employers will be permitted to "initiate and assist" in the formation of company unions, but will not be permitted to "dominate" them. This looks like a distinction without a difference. It is also reported that the amended bill may provide for proportional representation—as in the automobile agreement. The railroads are asking for a similar provision in the new Railway Labor Act, which is designed to provide the means of enforcing labor regulations on the railroads. Proportional representation would prevent a labor organization representing the majority from bargaining for all the workers. And it would lead, as Joseph B. Eastman, Coördinator of Transportation, told the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee, "to all manner of confusion, controversy and internal strife among employees." Which may be why it is desired.

Of greater significance is the recent reorganization of the N.R.A. in which General Johnson ordered all industries

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under codes to proceed immediately to set up industrial-relations committees for the adjustment of labor disputes. These committees will be comparable to the National Automobile Labor Board in that each will have a representative of industry and of labor and an impartial chairman. But the same ambiguity exists about how these groups will function, what principles and procedure they are expected to follow, as that from which the Automobile Labor Board suffers. It is not clear whether the committees are responsible to the Code Authorities, to the N.R.A., to the National Labor Board, or whether they are independent. This uncertainty should be cleared up speedily. Unless it is, industry is almost sure to dominate the work of the committees to the disadvantage of labor.

There is also no assurance at present that the rights of independent labor groups will be adequately protected—or even represented—on these new boards. The N.R.A.'s official Manual for Adjustment of Complaints merely prescribes that the "representatives of the employees should be chosen in such manner that all employees in the industry may be represented as fairly as possible." What this will mean in practice is anybody's guess. It is significant that attempts have already been made to nominate company-union men as the representatives of the employees. A further disadvantage exists in the provision that only the national industrial-relations committee in each industry will have enforcement powers. Each industry may set up regional and local boards, but these must refer unadjusted labor complaints and violations to the national committee for final action or prosecution. Unless this set-up functions far more efficiently and satisfactorily than the Regional Labor Board system—and there is no reason why it should—labor can hardly expect anything but interminable delays in the adjustment of disputes.

The proof of the pudding is, of course, in the eating. And on this score the work of the Automobile Labor Board prophesies little good to come of these industrial relations committees—particularly in industries where the workers are not well organized. The Automobile Board has been at work a month now, but it has refused to deal with the one issue in which the automobile workers are interested: the question of union recognition. Meanwhile, dissatisfaction with the Board is rapidly increasing. Some 4,000 tool and die-makers have already gone on strike in 70 jobbing shops, and now threaten to make the strike general in all the automobile plants. The peak of automobile production, however, will soon be passed. If the workers cannot gain their demands before this is reached, they will have lost their most important bargaining position.

Should the railroad workers have restored to them the ten-percent pay cut they voluntarily accepted in January, 1932? This is the question to which President Roosevelt must shortly find an answer. The railroads have served notice that when the present wage-reduction agreement expires on June 30, it will be succeeded by a reduction of 15 percent in basic wages. The workers, on the other hand, are demanding a ten-percent increase in basic rates. Perhaps both of these positions are for bargaining purposes, but neither side has thus far given any indication of weakening. Mr. Eastman has confessed his inability to compose the differences, and the President's suggestion that the cut be continued another six months has been flatly rejected by the unions.

The workers claim that they have suffered much more than the ten-percent reduction, owing to demotions, part time and furloughs. Some 150,000 men are even receiving less than $7 a week. They also point out that while railroad traffic increased over 35 percent between July, 1932, and July, 1933, employment actually declined. Net income of the railroads in 1933 was high enough to bring the bulk of them well out of the red. Accordingly, there is no possible argument for a 15-percent reduction and it would seem that many roads could even restore the basic wage if they were so inclined. Unfortunately, they are not. They want to spend the increased earnings on equipment and maintenance—two things badly neglected during the depression. It will be the President's pleasant duty to decide where the money should go, into transportation or into wages. Unless, that is, the workers, by striking, relieve him of the responsibility.

The hotel industry, it would appear, is making a strong bid for young men with executive aspirations. It has just modified its code to permit two executives for each five employees. With the exception of the newspaper industry —where all reporters and editorial workers are classed as executives—the hotel field must now be one of the most fertile in administrative opportunities. There is only one unfavorable factor. "Executives" are exempted from the maximum-hour provisions of the code (54 a week). Thus while the opportunities are almost unlimited, so are the hours.

WILLIAM P. MANGOLD.

Nymphs and Plug-Uglies

IT WILL not be suspected from the meager inches of its advertising (nor from the attitude of the metropolitan reviewers) that "The Constant Nymph" is that strange event in the experience of anyone who has attended his first hundred movies—something he never thought could happen. The picture is neither a Spectacle nor a Significant Departure (that is to say, the result of someone's being all dressed up and with nowhere to depart for): it merely combines the work, each in his own capacity, of several wise and sensitive and competent artists, which is of course quite all that is necessary, ever.

It is made from Margaret Kennedy's novel about the Sangers: how the young friend of the old musician and of his free-and-easy family of girls married for money just a shade too quickly to realize he should have done something else, and how the girl Tessa died shortly after—but I should like to be let out of telling the story, which is not to be captured in so many words. The point is that the mood of it has been translated into the quicksilver of what you can see passing across a screen, and that its life in this medium is as quick and real as that of the original.

Basil Dean, who directed the film (English again), had the good sense to leave the dialogue mainly to the author of the book; and what is more, he had the good fortune to employ in the major roles Brian Aherne, whose light touch and careless inner fire seemed precisely what was ordered, and Victoria Hopper, who, whatever you may say of her

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range, managed the young, resilient, breathless part of Tessa with only a minimum of flaws. From the beginning, though, you will find on analysis that satisfaction derives ultimately from its management, from the putting together of all the parts into a well proportioned and airy and sunlit structure (I do not, to fasten for example upon one of innumerable such touches, imagine that there has ever been a composite more deft and witty than that of the chamber-music scene). There is no hollow pretentiousness, no heavy-handed emphasis; pictorial clichés, with the exception of a minor instance or so, are not in it. Helped on by a thorough-paced secondary cast and impeded only by poor sound, Dean, Kennedy, Aherne and Hopper have got out a thing that touches the heart and delights the eye and in fact moves with such natural grace as to leave Hollywood's friends on the press pointing out in irritation and with some concern that it does not resemble Hollywood at all.

I do not know quite what sort of hold to get on "Viva Villa!" Making of Pancho Villa a popular hero on whose rough and sturdy shoulders alone Mexico became "a new Mexico, devoted to justice and equality," it is dangerously factual romance; and I suppose if you had nothing else to say you could point out historical aberrations all afternoon. What should be said always, however, is that it either does or does not make a fair fiction out of its pilfering from the archives. And the damnable thing about "Viva Villa!" is, it does and it doesn't. For the most part it is hell-and-corruption melodrama, with fighting and liberation going on during working hours, and after that lots of fun; yet there is something in its hugger-mugger of battle and sudden death that does catch the imagination. Whether it would do as much without Wallace Beery and (to a lesser extent) Stuart Erwin, I do not know. What I know very well is that as Villa Beery raises up by instinctive artistry the figure of a swaggering and lovable and stupid and almost grand man of the people. Those who imagine he is just so much stylized jostle and leer should for their instruction attend the scene of his so-long to the boys—a scene that has not often been equaled. Ben Hecht wrote the screen play and Jack Conway directed it so as to win, if not applause for his capability, at least the sanction of the present interests in Mexico.

Concerning "As the Earth Turns" (with Jean Muir), little need be said, once you understand that it turns a rather pale novel into distinctly unintentional comedy of the "Way Down East" stamp. . . . Of "Wild Cargo" and "Tarzan and His Mate," I've only space to say that they are worth seeing, for such various reasons as I shall try to get around to later.

OTIS C. FERGUSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

Systems Near and Far

SIR: I have never had much sympathy with the critics of toplofty reviewing. One of the virtues of your reviewing is that one does not get mere publisherlike blurbs. However, I think Mr. Taylor's remarks ["Scientist into Somnambulist," The New Republic, March 28] on Elton Mayo's "Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization" were just a little too harsh.

As nearly as I could tell, Mr. Taylor's chief objection (implicit) was that Professor Mayo did not plump for Communism or something equally far removed from our present systemless system. Now I am no apologist for our economic chaos—which I think is getting more chaotic day by day—but the devil should receive his due. . . . The problems Professor Mayo and associates are wrestling with will have to be faced sooner or later in any kind of industrial system which uses the machines and other technological appurtenances of our culture. If more studies and theories such as Professor Mayo struggles with in his later chapters were pounded into the heads of the business-school students and became functional ideas and ideals in the lives of modern business men, it is possible that our industrial disorder might make the transition to a more rational economic system, which it will have to make sooner or later—and make it with less waste and suffering and possible bloodshed than now seems probable. . . .

Miami University, Oxford, O. READ BAIN.

Ex Cathedra

SIR: In your issue of April 11, there are two passages that, though like the East and the West they come from the ends of the earth, look like identical twins when set side by side. The first is from Mr. Allen Tate's article on poetry:

> Poetry finds its true usefulness in its perfect inutility, a focus for repose of the will-driven intellect that constantly shakes the equilibrium of persons and societies with its unrelieved imposition of partial formulas upon the world. . . . It is the "kind of knowledge which is really essential to the world, the true content of its phenomena, that which is subject to no change, and therefore is known with equal truth for all time."

The second is from Professor Edwin D. Witte's review of "The Economics of the Recovery Program," by the seven Harvard economists. Mr. Witte says:

> This is a science of absolute and unchangeable laws, derived deductively, which, as expressed by Sombart, the German economic historian, and translated by Nussbaum, "is closer to medieval scholasticism than almost any other intellectual activity in the modern world!" Formerly this science was known as "political economy," but as is clearly developed in the last chapter of the book, the modern scholastics hold that economics has nothing to do with the actual conduct or reactions of groups which are struggling for power and advantage in the distribution of wealth . . .

Mr. Tate ends his article with the disarming ultimatum: "Let us not argue about it. It is here for those who have eyes to see."

The seven Harvard economists begin their book, according to Professor Witte, with this argument from omniscience: This book is written by men "who *are* economists and who know their science well enough to know that there *are* economic laws."

So, however the naughty world may wag, the peace that passes all understanding can settle down over Poetry and Economics "for all time."

JOSEPH K. HART.

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.

Julia Lathrop

JANE ADDAMS and Grace Abbott are assembling material for a book, "Life and Letters of Julia Lathrop," and will be grateful if any who have letters or other papers written by Miss Lathrop will send them to Grace Abbott, 528 Seventeenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. If desired, such papers will be copied and originals returned promptly. If return is not requested, the material will be filed with other Julia Lathrop papers in the manuscript division of the University of Chicago Library.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Destination Unknown[1]

"ON OUR WAY" might be called a collection of state papers if any other collection of state papers covering so short a period dealt with so many vital questions and were phrased in a style so far from that of the official document. It consists of President Roosevelt's more important radio speeches, messages to Congress and letters, connected by a running narrative that gives the setting of each. The whole constitutes a remarkably direct and simple story of what he has done and why he has done it. It reflects the informality and personal charm of the man himself; he even pauses to record his regret at the death of a member of the White House staff.

There is, of course, nothing here that was not known before to the careful reader of the newspapers. But it is well to have between the covers of so brief a book a general statement of the purposes and methods of the New Deal. Mr. Roosevelt says at the beginning that there was required a "rebuilding from the bottom up." It was necessary "by drastic measures to eliminate special privilege in the control of the old economic and social structure by a numerically very small but very powerful group of individuals." It was necessary to fight graft and crime and to seek a wider distribution of wealth. "The time called for and still calls for planning." Under the complexity of the program "there has run a very definite, deep and permanent objective."

Subsequently there are the familiar references to raising the purchasing power of wage earners and farmers, to raising the price level as an alternative to deflating debts, to coöperative business action for the purpose of preventing "overproduction," to warnings against speculative price increases. And, most important of all, there is his statement of faith that "we can count on industry once more to join in our general purpose to lift this new threat and to do it without taking any advantage of the public trust which has this day been reposed without stint in the good faith and high purpose of American business." Without imposing control, he merely asked that "managements give first consideration to the improvement of operating figures by greatly increased sales to be expected from the rising purchasing power of the public. . . . If we now inflate prices as fast and as far as we increase wages, the whole project will be set at naught." Mr. Roosevelt thus, by "drastic measures" to unseat the minority which had hitherto controlled business and government, actually meant resting implicit faith in existing business management. He expected that it would change the distribution of income in the interest of wage earners and farmers.

The President's statement that there must be planning and that there was a plan is not accompanied by any indication of what the planning authority really is, or what it has done to reconcile the possible inconsistencies involved in curbing "overproduction" and at the same time improving the standard of living of the workers, or in a general price inflation accompanied by warnings against speculation or increases in the prices of industrial products.

It is well to check the noble aims and likable personality of Mr. Roosevelt against the assessment of results made by the independent economists and social scientists in the Social Change pamphlet issued by the University of Chicago. They had no material subsequent to December; they were obliged to work rapidly; much of what they say consists merely of descriptions of the New Deal agencies and policies and guesses at the future. Nevertheless, certain factual measurements are possible.

W. Jett Lauck shows that average weekly earnings of workers in the major industrial groups scarcely increased during the year—the growth was from $19 to $19.30. The increase in average hourly earnings from 45.8 to 51.8 cents was about balanced by the decline in the number of hours worked. Since the cost of living rose during the year about two or three percent (seven percent between March, 1933, and December), the purchasing power of the employed worker was actually decreased. About 2,000,000 were reemployed, leaving over 10,000,000 without jobs, of whom only 4,000,000 had emergency employment furnished by the federal government. The index of the farmers' purchasing power, based on 100 during the five pre-war years, is shown by Professor J. H. Kolb of the University of Wisconsin to have increased from a low of 49 in February, 1933, to 71 in July, and then to have fallen again, under the New Deal machinery, to 59 in December. Professor Harry D. Gideonse of the University of Chicago states concerning the monetary policy that "the practical consequences were not impressive." Commodity prices rose until July, then fell steadily until October, when devaluation occurred. After a short rise thereafter, "by the end of the year prices were at the low level of October." Even if it succeeds, "a hit-or-miss inflationary movement might leave us with greater gaps in the price system than before." It might not correct the price disparities at all.

Professor Frederick C. Mills of Columbia and The National Bureau of Economic Research, conscious as a result of his previous studies that correction of price and income disparities was essential to "the restoration of a balanced and efficient economic system," finds that while there was some gain in this respect between January and July, "afterwards the correctional tendency was reversed." The index of the purchasing power of commodities bought by industry to be fabricated into goods for consumers fell from 89 in July to 84 in December, while these goods after fabrication rose from 102 in July to 103 in December. Meanwhile capital equipment, already too high-priced to encourage investment, rose from 108 to 109. It is probable, he says, that the net changes in distribution of income during the year "modified but slightly the distorted income structure of 1932."

The experts are uncertain whether we are on the road to recovery, and still more so whether any fundamental reconstruction is taking place. Professor William F. Ogburn believes that the basic social trends which lead to change in our order have not been affected. Professor R. M. MacIver points out the crucial issue when he says that we may be going either in the direction of a socially planned economy or toward the opposite goal of "a system of industrial syndicates, somewhat analogous to the fascist conception of the corporate state but without the unifying discipline which the latter implies."—"If each inclusive industrial association is to acquire an effective power to limit output and raise prices, the competitive struggle is merely

[1] On Our Way, by Franklin D. Roosevelt. New York: The John Day Company. 314 pages. $2.50.

Social Change and the New Deal, Edited by William F. Ogburn. The University of Chicago Press. 120 pages. $1.

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resumed under the guidance of the individualistic motive, at a higher level of organization. . . . The new institutions are here, but the essential point is—who shall control them?"

The President's simple faith in the public spirit of private industry and its capacity to plan for the social good has obviously been misplaced. The results up to date are most discouraging to any such attempt. No amount of geniality and noble generality can conceal the failure.

GEORGE SOULE.

Nijinsky and Madame

Nijinsky, by Romola Nijinsky. New York: Simon and Schuster. 464 pages. $3.75.

WE MUST be grateful to Madame Nijinsky for having given us more than could be found elsewhere about one of the great figures of modern art. Nijinsky is now forty-three and insane. If he came back to his sanity and saw what for the most part is called the art of dancing he would wish for oblivion again, or perhaps for death and the great silence. The book is, therefore, about him as if he were dead. It is also about Madame Nijinsky as if she were very much alive.

I once heard a Portuguese countess say of America that a country where the cultural life depended on the women was doomed. I argued the point only so far as to say that with us, if the women paid no attention to culture, there would not be, at present anyhow, any culture at all. I may as well say at the start the unpleasant things of Madame Nijinsky's book about her great husband. These might, if read long enough, be unpopular, but will not really be so. One is confident where the men go wrong, the dears; and it is not difficult to decide that what is the matter with Madame Nijinsky's history is merely the eternal war between the sexes. She saw the young Nijinsky when all Europe was wild about him, this young man of less than nineteen, such conception, such dancing perfection technically, and all of it under the protection of Diaghilev, who kept Nijinsky well watched by Vassily, the valet, so that none of the company could get at him, and nobody else could see him without Diaghilev's knowledge. Now it was plain this sort of love is not normal; Nijinsky needed a good woman to direct his life for him. How attractive he was also! And so she followed him everywhere, with bribes, trips and what not. She was, as she tells us, devotedly sitting at the head of a stair where he should pass; she took up dancing; of aristocratic family though she was she would follow him. Diaghilev ignored her, and so did Nijinsky pretty much. The genius of Diaghilev was evident to all, this remarkable nose for talent by which he collected to the service of the ballet the most promising and unheard of talents; but the young woman knew how baleful it was.

And then later, after years and marriage—he loved to roll in the grass with Kyra, his little daughter (he had hoped for a son, but had been sweet about it, in fact months went by before his wife knew he threw his gloves on the floor when he heard the girl-baby news)—when he felt the power of his Tolstoy reading and the preaching of an epileptic in the company, he dreamed of going back to the land in Russia, of being a saint, a mujik, a pilgrim, or even himself perhaps. But a wise wife knows better. After all, what Nijinsky had gone into was dancing, now what else could he be happy in? These great intuitions for which women are famous kept Nijinsky, through love, in line. In the course of that line he lived with the plotting and malicious mother-in-law when the couple were interned in Budapest, he was cut off from Diaghilev, and about some of his plans for a simple pilgrim life his wise wife "put her foot down." So it all worked out very sensibly, the strain of the internment, the spies, the enemy aliens, were obliterated by Mr. Otto Kahn's invitation from the Metropolitan Opera House, would Nijinsky come with the ballet here to New York? One government after another in Europe asked the Hungarian government to release one of the great artists of the world, and they got it worked out finally to the offer of exchanging him for something like five generals. At such a time this seemed quite a high bid. The American Ambassador arranged matters. The New York skyline was exquisite as one entered the port from Sandy Hook. Persecuted by Diaghilev, there were the diversions and trials over the United States. And so Nijinsky, simple soul, great artist, bold creator, unbelievable phenomenon, became a busy man of affairs. The only trouble was that in the end he went crazy and still is.

Without staying on this further, we may say that the history of Nijinsky's wife is certainly devoted, staunch, and as unescapable as was her pursuit of him up to his proposal on the Brazilian boat, when they still could not speak the same language, and Diaghilev had at the last moment canceled the voyage for dread of the sea. Well, in conclusion, one may only say brutally and unpopularly, that she got Nijinsky and we get the account of him. We cannot go into this; it is only by the study of the *creations* of these mothered and half-smothered males that we know them as creatures fitted into immortal time, and as the superb creative principle with which a devoted wife like Madame Nijinsky is both admiring and patient.

When this is said, we must come to the positive side of the book, in a due relation not to brave little women but to art and thought. There is a fine quality to the nature behind this account. It can render for us the character of a strong and simple being, a temperament that she herself knows cannot be understood save in the light of Dostoevsky, if that be a light. From this book we get the strange and lovely simplicity of soul that was really Nijinsky. We are humbled. The combination of boldness and gentle dream is fully inspiring. As the author writes, we get something of the exactitude of passion, for which the memory of Nijinsky's glamor gives a perspective. The statement gives the effect of a complaisant mind in her and, perhaps gently, a bold one, and suggests the power of a kind of dreamlike confession. She has—and this is also the tone that should make a public for the book—something of the gift of seeing herself as a novel. The gentle reader undoubtedly will wait with suspense until she can rescue the young Nijinsky from the entrepreneur villain. And her emotions as days pass, even to the end of the book, are conveyed with telling point from her first sight of the great artist and his furor, the marriage ceremony, the lawsuit against Diaghilev for her husband's back salary, her losing her jewels in the Spanish train, the American prominent people and ice-cream sodas, and her despair when Nijinsky's tragic end could no longer be doubted. The secret will probably die with Nijinsky as to whether he ever wanted to wring her neck or not; but, curiously enough, the result of all this ill advised, titillant femininity is that we await eagerly the glimpses of the great being that Nijinsky was, and that Madame Romola was at first as determined to possess as she is now to record, herself to be present both ways. This is fundamentally the suspense in the book, which is to say, "When shall we get the next data

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on Nijinsky?" Through this data, when we do get it, the volume is entirely absorbing.

The book is a brilliant storehouse of the ideas that led the group forward from their first beginnings to an invasion of Europe that convinced the world of Russia's place in art. The analyses of the various dances, for which the author has often the authority of Nijinsky himself, are invaluable. The account is in the end humbling and beautiful: it is not often that a writer has seen close at hand the working of a great genius. Madame Nijinsky's accounts are a little purified and possessed, not so much because she feared the public would be shocked as because she herself wishes to think matters a different way. We read hungrily for glimpses of a great artist; but I, having seen Nijinsky every other night at the height of his career, cannot quite so much as the writer does take it all as style, et cetera. I remember, for instance, that in his "Faune" Nijinsky showed knowledges that were wide and full and that stirred many persons to searchings of themselves that left them rather unnerved. Whatever changes may have come into his life, his expressions of it at his height (which was before he decided on the true life and daughter) were sharp and literal, and the name of Diaghilev, coming so often into that illegible journal that his wife mentions toward the last of the book, was not without point; nor were those earlier voyages to their beloved Lido at Venice with Diaghilev exactly on the plane with the little lambs in the gilt fields of the mosaics at St. Marks.

And yet, curiously, this is a remarkable book, and deserves every success. It records not always perhaps the precise detail about Nijinsky, for the whole of it is seen as reflected from the mirror of wifely egotism and through the purifying vista of his tragic breakdown. What it records is that side of Nijinsky that a woman whom he loved saw. It is, to repeat, a humbling book, often as exact and indispensable as it is elsewhere obtuse and wasteful.

To the volume is added a preface by M. Paul Claudel, complimentary, ambassadorial and polyphonic. It has a small but muddled effect, a libation of honey that needs straining.

STARK YOUNG.

Government by Ghouls

Merchants of Death: A Study of the International Armament Industry, by H. C. Engelbrecht and F. C. Hanighen. Foreword by Harry Elmer Barnes. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. 319 pages. $2.50.

CLOTHESPINS should be provided with every copy of the Book of the Month Club's May selection to protect the noses of sensitive readers against the odor of the armament industry in the raw. Other writers have interpreted history in terms of religion, culture and economics; Messrs. Engelbrecht and Hanighen confine themselves to the munitions industry and discover that it has played an increasingly important part in contemporary affairs. Yet even as long ago as the sixteenth century the gunsmiths of Liége were selling their wares to the Spanish invaders of Belgium, and during the French Revolution German and Austrian munitions makers smuggled arms to their French enemies by way of Switzerland, thus establishing a precedent that was revived a century and a quarter later when German carburetors and French aluminum took the same underground route. Nor is the record of the American musketeers much more glorious. The senior J. P. Morgan unloaded defective rifles on the Union army subsequently suing the government for full payment, and Colt, Winchester and Remington became household words throughout the world by supplying small arms—always an American specialty—to rival forces everywhere. By 1870 the Remington firm had persuaded the United States government to violate its neutrality and make possible a sale of guns to the French. Twenty-three years later Charlie Schwab was accused of helping Carnegie to sell defective armor plate to the United States Navy. The American munitions industry was approaching maturity.

It was during the World War that the armament maker came into his own. Exactly what part he played in bringing about American intervention we may never know, but Francis Delaisi's new book, "La Bataille de l'Or," the work of a trained economist who has helped to publicize the international munitions industry, contains this revealing passage:

> After the close of 1915, France had to pledge to New York all the gold that it had withdrawn from circulation and to use all its best French and foreign securities to pay its bills in America. The British Treasury therefore had to carry the whole burden alone, but it became exhausted too, and in March, 1917, it could not meet a payment of fifty millions. In April, the United States happily entered the War.

The senior Morgan's record in the Civil War has already been alluded to; in the World War the banking house that he founded became the chief financial link between the Allied Powers and the American munitions makers. Henry P. Davison, of the Morgan firm, took charge of the Red Cross drive for $100,000,000 and in a review of Mr. Lamont's life of his late partner we have the word of The Harvard Graduates' Magazine that "it is not generally known by Americans that much of this huge sum was spent in breaking the back of the revolts of the French troops in France—a use rather far from the minds of those who gave to succor wounded American soldiers." *Plus ça change.* Today Mr. Norman H. Davis, who figures on the Morgan preferred lists and borrowed money from the firm, represents the United States at the Disarmament Conference.

But it would be as great a mistake to blame all the ills of America on J. P. Morgan as it would be to blame all the ills of Europe on Sir Basil Zaharoff. "Merchants of Death" does not fall into any such error and its authors wisely point out that the munitions maker is as much a part of the world we live in as the banker or the gangster. The series of recent exposures in the foreign press, in The Living Age and in Fortune, indicate the power of the international armament ring, and Messrs. Engelbrecht and Hanighen have presented by far the most effective and complete version of this story that has yet appeared anywhere. This is the disturbing conclusion they reach: "An alliance of governments with war industries threatens to make the arms makers supreme in economic life and after that in government. A world dominated economically and politically by the armament industry will eventually result, if wars continue unabated."

What is the solution? Not nationalization of the munitions industry, for Japanese experience has shown the futility of that course. Real disarmament is the only answer, but that will be possible only when war itself has been eliminated. Effective propaganda therefore becomes the need of the hour and "Merchants of Death" rises magnificently to the occasion with the unvarnished truth.

QUINCY HOWE.

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Coalpit College

I Went To Pit College, by Lauren Gilfillan. New York: The Viking Press. 288 pages. $2.50.

WE HAVE had a great many books about American labor conditions. We have heard about the steel workers in Pittsburgh, the cotton pickers in the South, the mill workers in New England; and the Pennsylvania coal miners are not altogether new to us. But Lauren Gilfillan's book, though it deals with these very miners, is a completely fresh account. It is different from the ordinary "labor" books, and is superior to them. In the average book of this sort the author has an axe to grind, and for that reason one suspects him a little. His facts, however true they may be, fit his theory so neatly that one is afraid that he may have stacked the cards. This is not the case with Miss Gilfillan. Though she went to a Pennsylvania coal town fresh from Smith College, she did not go there equipped with a set of ideas culled from Economics 305. She went simply to see and to hear. And because she was unbiased, amazingly receptive, one is convinced, reading her book, that everything she says is true. One would be sure of this whether or not one had ever heard of a Pennsylvania miner.

Miss Gilfillan came to Avelonia late one night by taxi and stopped there because she was too tired to go any farther. The name of this destitute and desolate town reminded her of Arthur's Avalon. That swift, educated memory of Malory and Tennyson was her goodbye to Smith and all its works. At once, she threw herself into the job of posing as one of the mining people. She ate their fatback bacon and potatoes, slept two and three in a filthy bed, got lice in her hair and forgot what a bath felt like. She worked in the mine, disguised as a boy, and went on picket with the strikers. She sang the "International," and danced on a Saturday night. A miner boy fell in love with her.

Soon enough, of course, the sharp-eyed villagers found her out. Her typewriter gave them the clue, and they called her "the writer from New York." But, like a good actress "living the part," she went on behaving and, at last, feeling like an Avelonia girl. Not once did she hold herself aloof from the miners, and never, writing her story, does she draw back to interpret them, or to ask pity for them. Now and then she cannot resist a temptation to dress her story up with highfalutin, unsuitable comparisons, as when she likens a coal miner to "an Ethiopian slave imprisoned in the dungeon of the troll king's palace," but such girlish ornamentation is so rare as to call attention to itself. On the whole, she only records what she saw and what was told her. She presents the people in their own terms, leaving them the dignity of their poverty and their hardihood.

"I Went to Pit College" first appears to be no more than a static account of conditions in a mining town, but slowly it turns into a story. It is the story of how Lauren was forced to leave town. The "writer from New York" rumor began the trouble. People who had liked and sheltered her grew cool to her when they heard it. As fearful and suspicious as badly treated animals, they could not believe that a member of the boss class could mean them anything but harm. The Communist organizers, themselves as alien to the town as Lauren, were jealous enough of her local prestige to foment the distrust into open anger. She was boycotted into leaving Avelonia.

Marxian critics may not approve of Miss Gilfillan's book, since it is obstinately impartial and refuses to suggest remedies, but they and all its readers cannot help but feel and admire the terrific reality it gives its subject.

MARY MCCARTHY.

I'D LIKE to say more about "I Went to Pit College," mostly in the light of what has happened in a literary way since the book first turned up for review. That the adventure of it is bigger and more significant than the usual Halliburton stunt is obvious: what I had thought would be equally clear is that both of them boil down to the same essential motive—the same calculation, roughly the same lack of sympathy and conviction. Miss Gilfillan decides to be a writer and Get Material, and so she goes up to people and says, I am a writer, please produce material. Disguising herself as a poor waif and for weeks accepting the pitiful hospitality of miners, she does not even attempt bare compensation, on the mysterious grounds that to have slipped the positive godsend of a note under the mattress on leaving would have been to harm her disguise—which she proceeded to heighten at every turn by saying, I am a writer, see my typewriter. The book is thus of worth only in so far as the personal record of what happened to Miss Gilfillan rises above the artificiality of the whole business: it should never be taken for a gripping social document or even an unstudied and humanitarian gesture. After all, you might well guess that any unequivocal statement of the truth about these starved and broken creatures —how they get that way because men are *not* brothers, and because the joke of justice-and-mercy is an abstract joke, and because the all-moving factor of greed is no abstract, but yours and mine—I say you may damn well know that any true picture of a mining town would enjoy no great fame and sale among such comfortable consciences as can have sent around (not only coal, not only doughnuts) whatever current bit of print may be the proper thing to have sent around, and just put it on the bill won't you.

O. C. F.

Post-Transitional

Beyond the Street, by Edgar Calmer. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

Easter Sun, by Peter Neagoe. New York: Coward-McCann. $2.

THE WRITERS of both of these novels appeared in Transition, in company with a good many other writers, some of them famous now and others quite thoroughly forgotten. As a magazine, Transition was an omnibus and carry-all, presumably for the benefit of writers in a hurry to get from some place to some other place, although one could never be sure of either the point of departure or the destination. All one could say was that Transition contained evidence of rapid travel.

"Beyond the Street" is not a moving vehicle. There is a good deal of jerkiness in it, but no rumble, no bustle, no sudden pause when the subdued voices of the passengers can be heard talking among themselves, and no momentous going on again. There ought to be: the scene is laid in a boys' high school in New York City, part of a huge system of public education where degrees and kinds of adolescence and maturity are jumbled together in a hurly-burly of incompetence, brilliance, jealousies, crabbedness, clean thinking, nastiness, the flag, the public men whose names are to be learned and idolized, the dead languages, the new, the class traits, the human traits. It was a

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superb subject, as any microcosm is. Yet with all this stuff to hand the author has made of Starrett High School a patch of sexual crosses and crises. Literally, somebody loves somebody, who loves somebody else, who is as likely as not to love the first somebody. The point is that none of these somebodies is alive, in spite of all their yearnings. And Starrett High School as a background for their dramas remains a thin and shadowy place.

Peter Neagoe's novel is vastly better, even though its subject is more distant and less exciting than the material of "Beyond the Street." A Rumanian girl possesses beauty and poise and aloofness that bewilder and fascinate the village in which she lives; at last the village damns her. "Easter Sun" cannot be put into a sentence; its intricacy escapes summation. Eugene Jolas called Neagoe's short stories "telluric," which is one way of saying it. But there is a subtlety here, in the person of the humpbacked school teacher, that is not earthy, but intellectual, and none the less real. The orchestration of the novel is brilliant: one live instrument modulates another, and the basic life and beliefs and work of the people run like motifs through every solo and duet. There is no other way to describe the sudden jointure of actions, when the novel is two-thirds over, than in orchestral terms—there is a gradual dying down of sounds throughout the Easter preparations, until the final passionate outburst of noise and commotion and the end. "Easter Sun" is a clear enough name-post; we know where Neagoe has been and where he has arrived. His book is to be admired; it ought also to be read.

ALASTAIR QUINBY.

China Through Christian Eyes

The Chinese: Their History and Culture, by Kenneth Scott Latourette. New York: The Macmillan Company. 2 vols. 910 pages. $7.50.

AS TEXTBOOKS go, this is a satisfying history of China. It is in fact better than most, better proportioned and more judicious in its distribution of unfamiliar Chinese terminology. It is one of those works, written with uninspired competence, that would have satisfied us ten years ago, when information had for its function merely the satisfaction of curiosity. The writing is careful though dull; the documentation is scrupulous and ample, the bibliographies supplied for each chapter being of great value to the student; and the customary deformity of shrinking the several thousand years of Chinese history before the eighteen-hundreds to a third of a book is here corrected. Furthermore, the author has the obsessive impartiality of the "scientific historian," which keeps him from positive statements and makes his paragraphs soggy with qualifications, but which, ten years ago, was held up as the ideal of historical writing; today, in the midst of a society violently in motion, the reader asks for something more.

Is Mr. Latourette successful in his impartiality? He has been a missionary, and, perhaps unconsciously, he gives undue space to religious history in China and undue importance, certainly, to the role of the missions. On the whole, he deals with Occidental imperialism with rather too much Christian tolerance.

His comments on the current situation in China are vague, and he seems anxious to avoid making judgments. In a negative sense, however, he makes some decided judgments. The book brings events up to the middle of the year 1933. In that year the soviets in China had consolidated themselves in a vast territory with a population of seventy-five millions, where an efficient, just and orderly government has been functioning. Its threat to the Nanking government is a growing one; and it is now open knowledge that the Nanking resistance to the Japanese in the recent undeclared war in Shanghai and Manchuria was deliberately weak in order to retain Japanese assistance in the campaigns against the Red armies. This situation is unquestionably the most significant and stirring thing in contemporary Chinese history. All that Mr. Latourette has to offer on this head, however, is a few prejudiced sentences, to the effect that "The majority of 'Communists,' indeed, were really bandits or locally independent military groups." This is neither impartial nor accurate.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Olympian Handyman

Thomas A. Edison, by Mary Childs Nerney. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. 334 pages. $3.50.

MISS NERNEY subtitles her biography "A Modern Olympian." More accurately, Edison seems to have been an Olympian handyman or jack-of-all-trades. Paraffin paper, talking dolls, a central electric-heating system, an ore crusher and a patent neuralgia liniment were among the thousands of developments to issue from his laboratory. Cast in a Yankee mold, born in Whitman's West of simple separate persons, he remained defiantly, and gruffly and uncouthly when crossed, the infinitely industrious, hard-headed Yankee handyman to the end. Millions of dollars rolled in to him and he poured them out to finance new experiments, letting his creditors' notes go to protest to save the trouble of keeping track of the dates they came due. He accepted cigars in lieu of dividends voted him by grateful directors; yet he drove close bargains with his workers, opposed unionization to the limit, and compensated his most faithful assistants so wretchedly that only those who quit him for other employers were able to put by anything for their old age.

Among the interesting anecdotes in this interesting book is the story of how Colonel Lindbergh, as a judge in Edison's boy-inventor test, managed to bar from first place a lad who had admitted he thought there would be a social redistribution of wealth in time. Another patriot, Samuel Insull, also comes in for some attention in the natural course of the story; it was he, apparently, who, well placed in Edison's employ, helped manipulate the Edison equipment interests into the power of Morgan and Company.

MURRAY GODWIN.

Books in Brief

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

TOWARD AN AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY LABOR MOVEMENT: A Statement of Programmatic Orientation, by the American Workers' Party. *New York: The American Workers' Party. 48 pages. 15 cents.*

The American Workers' party is an outgrowth of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, and this pamphlet is an exposition of its program, both of principle and of action. Its recognized leader is Mr. A. J. Muste, formerly of Brookwood Labor College. The present economic crisis is regarded as the beginning of the end of capitalism, of which the World War and the Russian Revolution were unmistakable signs. All plans and "deals" designed to save capitalism are bound to fail because they cannot solve the central contradiction between a productive

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plant capable of satisfying all reasonable needs and a system of social relations that prevents it from operating. The Socialist, Communist and Farmer-Labor parties are found wanting to the needs of the situation. Fascism is so reactionary that it is obliged to disguise itself with ultra-radical phrases. The A.W.P. aims to be a revolutionary party of labor. "A revolutionary party cannot base its program exclusively or primarily on the farmers." Nevertheless, the new party's attitude toward the farmers is expressed somewhat dubiously. H. S.

WHAT EVERYBODY WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT MONEY. Planned and edited by G. D. H. Cole. *New York:* Alfred A. *Knopf. 462 pages. $3.*

Nine economists from Oxford have combined to produce this book. There are twelve articles, of which four are contributed by the editor. They cover money and credit, banking, foreign exchanges, investment, debts, prices, etc. One article is devoted to a discussion of "four monetary heretics"—Major Douglas, Professor Soddy, Silvio Gesell and Robert Eisler. Both editor and contributors accept the quantity theory of money, of which the editor speaks in one place as "true in a sense," but "impossible to apply in practice"; while one of the contributors defines it as meaning that "people will, in the long run, exchange whatever money they have, however much it may be, for whatever commodities they can get, however few"—a manifest absurdity, except under famine conditions. The same contributor, Mr. Durbin, says that "no one wants money for its own sake," but for "food, clothes and houses"; he seems to think that we are living in a non-capitalistic society. Perhaps that is the reason for his speaking of wage workers as "consumers." So, for that matter, does Major Douglas, whose terminology, judging from the extracts in this book, is fearful and wonderful. Thus, cost of production is called by him "rate of flow of prices," exports are included in "consumption," and imports in "production." The book as a whole can hardly be recommended to the layman, although some of the chapters, like Mr. Cole's on "Money and the World Crisis" and Mr. Radice's on "Commercial Banks and Credit," are informative. H. S.

Science

THE DRAMA OF WEATHER, by Sir Napier Shaw. *New York: The Macmillan Company. 283 pages, illustrated. $3.50.*

An epigram credited to New York City's genial meteorologist is to the effect that "there is no such thing as bad weather; there are only different kinds of good weather." The present unusually handsome and informative volume will do more to explain that paradox than seems possible in so small a compass. Sir Napier Shaw, one of the greatest living authorities on meteorology (his five-volume "Manual" is the specialist's pride), treats the subject as a colossal drama. First there is "Pageantry in the Sky," all about clouds, snow, sun, rain and light effects. Next is an excellent historical resumé, "Ideas of the Drama." "The Watchers" explains the technique of weather observation, how instruments and men make order out of the seeming chaos; "The Score" discusses the complexities of winds and currents, and "The Chorus" presents us with the deep underlying rhythms of climate throughout the world and touches on the possibilities of cyclical prediction lately stressed in the work of Dr. Adams at Mt. Wilson Observatory. A final chapter on "Weather Maps" rounds out a volume that, for sheer readability, beauty of illustrations and wealth of knowledge, is one of the most gratifying contributions to "popular" scientific literature in recent years.

THE MAKING OF GEOGRAPHY, by R. E. Dickinson and O. J. R. Howarth. *New York: Oxford University Press. 264 pages, illustrated. $3.*

This is another, and an extremely worthwhile, addition to the interesting series of science manuals issued by the Oxford Press. The authors have succeeded, by careful selection from an immense body of material, in giving a good general picture of the development of geography as a science, beginning with primitive ideas and the speculations of the Greeks before Ptolemy. There are excellent chapters on the development of cosmological thought, and on the importance of better instruments and more exact measurements. The account of the work of such pioneers as Varenius, von

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Humboldt and Ritter is particularly illuminating, as is the entire final part of the book, dealing with the growth of human geography. The illustrations are a distinct help, but a good modern map of the world should be added to help the reader follow a fascinating but complicated story. H. W.

Travel

ADVENTURES IN NAKEDNESS, by Julian Strange. *New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 300 pages, illustrated. $3.*

Mr. Strange toured the prosperous nudist colonies in the South of France, then the indigent and oppressed colonies in Austria and Switzerland, then the flourishing *Gelände* in Germany (the journey was over before Hitler had won his *Kampf*). He writes simply, plausibly and without affectation. His readers should expect to find no scandal and no exposé. According to this book, nudism is everywhere a family affair, explicitly associated with sun and exercise, and implicitly bound up with the mixture of sexes and ages. The purchaser will perhaps be surprised to find that "Adventures in Nudism" has a bouquet no racier than one of familiar democracy and respectability; and the reader who wishes to see something new will, in the many photographs, see nothing he has never seen before, but a great deal more of it. J. N.

Fiction

HARRIET, by Elizabeth Jenkins. *New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.*

This is another one of those English novels that run the chance of being damned without a hearing in this country on account of the hysterical praises from English reviewers that the publisher has made the mistake of splashing all over the jacket. One London critic breathlessly declares: "I found the book so exciting I could hardly read it." But the American reader, once he has hurtled this formidable barricade of blurbs, will find that "Harriet," though not ecstatically supercharged with excitement, is still a creditable and engrossing study of cruelty and murder. The victim is a harmless, amiable and half-witted young woman, whom Lewis Oman marries for her money and then cold-bloodedly allows to be beaten and starved to death by his brother and his wife. These events, and the trial that follows them, are related without melodrama and in a style as cool and weird as the professional manner of an ancient Chinese torturer. J. M.

Contributors

Marquis W. Childs, of the staff of The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, is the author of "Sweden: Where Capitalism Is Controlled," published recently in the John Day Company's pamphlet series. He has been commissioned by that publisher to write a study of the Mississippi River and its place in the social and economic life of the lands it drains.

Kenneth Burke is the author of "The White Oxen," "Towards a Better Life" and "Counter-Statement." He is preparing a critical study, "Perspective by Incongruity," a companion piece to his "On Interpretation," published by The Plowshare.

John Strachey is the author of "The Coming Struggle for Power" and "The Menace of Fascism."

Emily White Stevens is at the University of North Carolina, where she has devoted three years to a study of the problems of adequate nutrition in the South.

Quincy Howe is editor of The Living Age.

Mary McCarthy contributes book reviews to various periodicals.

Isidor Schneider is the author of a volume of poetry, "The Temptation of Anthony," and a novel, "Doctor Transit." He is at present at work on a second novel.

Murray Godwin has written articles for The New Freeman, Transition, The North American Review, The Saturday Review and other publications.

The initials signed to the shorter reviews are those of Herman Simpson, Harold Ward, James Neugass and Jerre Mangione.

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